This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

HN 3UGE H

Digitized by Google

KPE 2804 (8)

Harvard College Library

FROM THE
KENNETH MATHESON TAYLOR
FUND
GIVEN IN 1899 BY
JESSIE TAYLOR PHILIPS
IN MEMORY OF HER BROTHER
KENNETH MATHESON TAYLOR
(Class of 1890)
FOR ENGLISH LITERATURE

Digitized by Google

17424.903

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE WORKS

OF

HENRY FIELDING

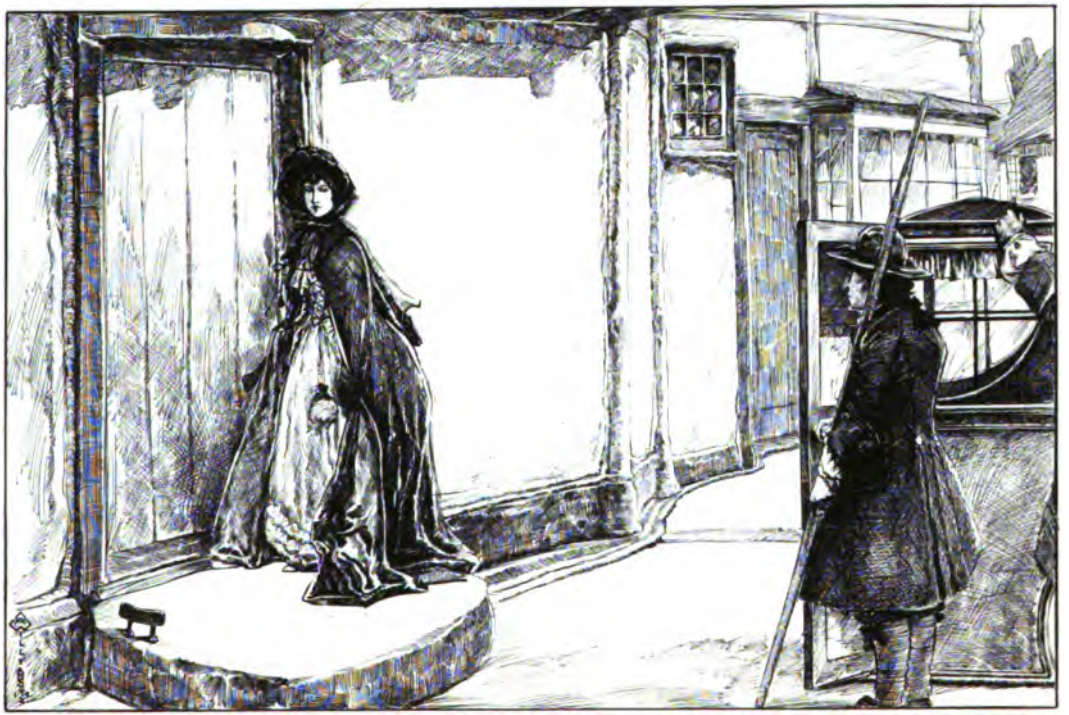
IN TWELVE VOLUMES

VOLUME EIGHT

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



COPYRIGHT 1905 BY THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

AMELIA CALLS ON MRS. BENNET

Amelia waited near five minutes at Mrs. Bennet's door before any one came to open it

Digitized by Google

THE WORKS OF HENRY FIELDING

VOLUME EIGHT

AMELIA

COMPLETE IN THREE PARTS

PART II.

WITH THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE, AND AN INTRODUCTION BY

G. H. MAYNADIER, PH.D.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

NEW YORK

THOMAS Y. CROWELL & COMPANY

PUBLISHERS

Digitized by Google

17424.903
KPE 2804 (8)

Taylor friend

Copyright, 1903, by
THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

UNIVERSITY PRESS · JOHN WILSON
AND SON, CAMBRIDGE, U. S. A.

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS

BOOK V

CHAPTER ONE

PAGE

In which the reader will meet with an old acquaintance 1

CHAPTER ONE *

Containing a brace of doctors and much physical matter 6

CHAPTER TWO

In which Booth pays a visit to the noble lord . . 11

CHAPTER THREE

Relating principally to the affairs of serjeant Atkinson 17

CHAPTER FOUR

Containing matters that require no preface . . . 23

CHAPTER FIVE

Containing much heroic matter 31

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS

CHAPTER SIX

PAGE

In which the reader will find matter worthy his consideration 37

CHAPTER SEVEN

Containing various matters 45

CHAPTER EIGHT

The heroic behaviour of Colonel Bath 53

CHAPTER NINE

Being the last chapter of the fifth book 60

BOOK VI

CHAPTER ONE

Panegyrics on beauty, with other grave matters . 66

CHAPTER TWO

Which will not appear, we presume, unnatural to all married readers 73

CHAPTER THREE

In which the history looks a little backwards . . 79

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS

CHAPTER FOUR

PAGE

Containing a very extraordinary incident . . . 87

CHAPTER FIVE

Containing some matters not very unnatural . . 94

CHAPTER SIX

A scene in which some ladies will possibly think Amelia's conduct exceptionable 100

CHAPTER SEVEN

A chapter in which there is much learning . . . 107

CHAPTER EIGHT

Containing some unaccountable behaviour in Mrs. Ellison 113

CHAPTER NINE

Containing a very strange incident 118

BOOK VII

CHAPTER ONE

A very short chapter, and consequently requiring no preface 126

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS

CHAPTER TWO

PAGE

The beginning of Mrs. Bennet's history 129

CHAPTER THREE

Continuation of Mrs. Bennet's story 140

CHAPTER FOUR

Further continuation 148

CHAPTER FIVE

The story of Mrs. Bennet continued 155

CHAPTER SIX

Further continued 166

CHAPTER SEVEN

The story farther continued 175

CHAPTER EIGHT

Further continuation 180

CHAPTER NINE

The conclusion of Mrs. Bennet's history . . . 187

CHAPTER TEN

Being the last chapter of the seventh book . . 193

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS

BOOK VIII

CHAPTER ONE

PAGE

Being the first chapter of the eighth book . . . 200

CHAPTER TWO

Containing an account of Mr. Booth's fellow-sufferers 206

CHAPTER THREE

Containing some extraordinary behaviour in Mrs. Ellison 210

CHAPTER FOUR

Containing, among many matters, the exemplary behaviour of Colonel James 218

CHAPTER FIVE

Comments upon authors 224

CHAPTER SIX

Which inclines rather to satire than panegyric . 234

CHAPTER SEVEN

Worthy a very serious perusal 240

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS

CHAPTER EIGHT

PAGE

Consisting of grave matters 244

CHAPTER NINE

A curious chapter, from which a curious reader may draw sundry observations 252

CHAPTER TEN

In which are many profound secrets of philosophy 259

Digitized by Google

AMELIA

BOOK V

CHAPTER ONE

IN WHICH THE READER WILL MEET WITH AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE.

BOOTH'S affairs (were) put on a better aspect than they had ever worn before, and he was willing to make use of the opportunity of one day in seven to taste the fresh air.

At nine in the morning he went to pay a visit to his old friend Colonel James, resolving, if possible, to have a full explanation of that behaviour which appeared to him so mysterious: but the colonel was as inaccessible as the best defended fortress; and it was as impossible for Booth to pass beyond his entry as the Spaniards found it to take Gibraltar. He received the usual answers; first, that the colonel was not stirring, and an hour after that he was gone out. All that he got by asking further questions was only to receive still ruder answers, by which, if he had been very sagacious, he might have been satisfied how little worth his while it was to desire to go in; for the porter at a great man's door is a kind of thermometer, by which you may discover the warmth or coldness of his master's friendship.

Digitized by Google

Nay, in the highest stations of all, as the great man himself hath his different kinds of salutation, from an hearty embrace with a kiss, and my dear lord or dear Sir Charles, down to, well Mr. ——, what would you have me do? so the porter to some bows with respect, to others with a smile, to some he bows more, to others less low, to others not at all. Some he just lets in, and others he just shuts out. And in all this they so well correspond, that one would be inclined to think that the great man and his porter had compared their lists together, and, like two actors concerned to act different parts in the same scene, had rehearsed their parts privately together before they ventured to perform in public.

Though Booth did not, perhaps, see the whole matter in this just light, for that in reality it is, yet he was discerning enough to conclude, from the behaviour of the servant, especially when he considered that of the master likewise, that he had entirely lost the friendship of James; and this conviction gave him a concern that not only the flattering prospect of his lordship's favour was not able to compensate, but which even obliterated, and made him for a while forget the situation in which he had left his Amelia: and he wandered about almost two hours, scarce knowing where he went, till at last he dropt into a coffee-house near St. James's, where he sat himself down.

He had scarce drank his dish of coffee before he heard a young officer of the guards cry to another, "Od, d—n me, Jack, here he comes — here 's old honour and dignity, faith." Upon which he saw a

Digitized by Google

chair open, and out issued a most erect and stately figure indeed, with a vast periwig on his head, and a vast hat under his arm. This august personage, having entered the room, walked directly up to the upper end, where having paid his respects to all present of any note, to each according to seniority, he at last cast his eyes on Booth, and very civilly, though somewhat coldly, asked him how he did.

Booth, who had long recognized the features of his old acquaintance Major Bath, returned the compliment with a very low bow; but did not venture to make the first advance to familiarity, as he was truly possessed of that quality which the Greeks considered in the highest light of honour, and which we term modesty; though indeed, neither ours nor the Latin language hath any word adequate to the idea of the original.

The colonel, after having discharged himself of two or three articles of news, and made his comments upon them, when the next chair to him became vacant, called upon Booth to fill it. He then asked him several questions relating to his affairs; and, when he heard he was out of the army, advised him earnestly to use all means to get in again, saying that he was a pretty lad, and they must not lose him.

Booth told him in a whisper that he had a great deal to say to him on that subject if they were in a more private place; upon this the colonel proposed a walk in the Park, which the other readily accepted.

During their walk Booth opened his heart, and,

Digitized by Google

among other matters, acquainted Colonel Bath that he feared he had lost the friendship of Colonel James; "though I am not," said he, "conscious of having done the least thing to deserve it."

Bath answered, "You are certainly mistaken, Mr. Booth. I have indeed scarce seen my brother since my coming to town; for I have been here but two days; however, I am convinced he is a man of too nice honour to do anything inconsistent with the true dignity of a gentleman." Booth answered, "He was far from accusing him of anything dishonourable." — "D—n me," said Bath, "if there is a man alive can or dare accuse him: if you have the least reason to take anything ill, why don't you go to him? you are a gentleman, and his rank doth not protect him from giving you satisfaction." "The affair is not of any such kind," says Booth; "I have great obligations to the colonel, and have more reason to lament than complain; and, if I could but see him, I am convinced I should have no cause for either; but I cannot get within his house; it was but an hour ago a servant of his turned me rudely from the door." "Did a servant of my brother use you rudely?" said the colonel, with the utmost gravity. "I do not know, sir, in what light you see such things; but, to me, the affront of a servant is the affront of the master; and if he doth not immediately punish it, by all the dignity of a man, I would see the master's nose between my fingers." Booth offered to explain, but to no purpose; the colonel was got into his stilts; and it was impossible to take him down, nay, it was as much as

Digitized by Google

Booth could possibly do to part with him without an actual quarrel; nor would he, perhaps, have been able to have accomplished it, had not the colonel by accident turned at last to take Booth's side of the question; and before they separated he swore many oaths that James should give him proper satisfaction.

Such was the end of this present interview, so little to the content of Booth, that he was heartily concerned he had ever mentioned a syllable of the matter to his honourable friend.

Digitized by Google

[This chapter occurs in the original edition of *Amelia*, between 1 and 2. It is omitted later, and would have been omitted here but for an accident. As it had been printed it may as well appear: for though it has no great value it may interest some readers as an additional illustration of Fielding's dislike to doctors. — Ed.

CONTAINING A BRACE OF DOCTORS AND MUCH PHYSICAL MATTER.

HE now returned with all his uneasiness to Amelia, whom he found in a condition very little adapted to relieve or comfort him. That poor woman was now indeed under very great apprehensions for her child, whose fever now began to rage very violently: and what was worse, an apothecary had been with her, and frightened her almost out of her wits. He had indeed represented the case of the child to be very desperate, and had prevailed on the mother to call in the assistance of a doctor.

Booth had been a very little time in the room before this doctor arrived, with the apothecary close at his heels, and both approached the bed, where the former felt the pulse of the sick, and performed several other physical ceremonies.

He then began to enquire of the apothecary what he had already done for the patient; all which, as soon as informed, he greatly approved. The doctor then sat down, called for a pen and ink, filled a whole side of a sheet of paper with physic, then took a

Digitized by Google

guinea, and took his leave; the apothecary waiting upon him downstairs, as he had attended him up.

All that night both Amelia and Booth sat up with their child, who rather grew worse than better. In the morning Mrs. Ellison found the infant in a raging fever, burning hot, and very light-headed, and the mother under the highest dejection; for the distemper had not given the least ground to all the efforts of the apothecary and doctor, but seemed to defy their utmost power, with all that tremendous apparatus of phials and gallypots, which were arranged in battle-array all over the room.

Mrs. Ellison, seeing the distrest, and indeed distracted, condition of Amelia's mind, attempted to comfort her by giving her hopes of the child's recovery. "Upon my word, madam," says she, "I saw a child of much the same age with miss, who, in my opinion, was much worse, restored to health in a few days by a physician of my acquaintance. Nay, I have known him cure several others of very bad fevers; and, if miss was under his care, I dare swear she would do very well." "Good Heavens! madam," answered Amelia, "why should you not mention him to me? For my part I have no acquaintance with any London physicians, nor do I know whom the apothecary hath brought me." "Nay, madam," cries Mrs. Ellison, "it is a tender thing, you know, to recommend a physician; and as for my doctor, there are abundance of people who give him an ill name. Indeed, it is true, he hath cured me twice of fevers, and so he hath several others to my knowledge; nay, I never heard of any more than one of

Digitized by Google

his patients that died; and yet, as the doctors and apothecaries all give him an ill character, one is fearful, you know, dear madam." Booth enquired the doctor's name, which he no sooner heard than he begged his wife to send for him immediately, declaring he had heard the highest character imaginable of him at the Tavern from an officer of very good understanding. Amelia presently complied, and a messenger was despatched accordingly.

But before the second doctor could be brought, the first returned with the apothecary attending him as before. He again surveyed and handled the sick; and when Amelia begged him to tell her if there was any hopes, he shook his head, and said, "To be sure, madam, miss is in a very dangerous condition, and there is no time to lose. If the blisters which I shall now order her, should not relieve her, I fear we can do no more."—"Would not you please, sir," says the apothecary, "to have the powders and the draught repeated?" "How often were they ordered?" cries the doctor. "Only *tertia* quaq. horâ," says the apothecary. "Let them be taken every hour by all means," cries the doctor; "and—let me see, pray get me a pen and ink."—"If you think the child in such imminent danger," said Booth, "would you give us leave to call in another physician to your assistance—indeed my wife"—"Oh, by all means," said the doctor, "it is what I very much wish. Let me see, Mr. Arsenic, whom shall we call?" "What do you think of Dr. Dosewell?" said the apothecary.—"Nobody better," cries the physician.—"I should have no objection

Digitized by Google

to the gentleman," answered Booth, "but another hath been recommended to my wife." He then mentioned the physician for whom they had just before sent. "Who, sir?" cries the doctor, dropping his pen; and when Booth repeated the name of Thompson, "Excuse me, sir," cries the doctor hastily, "I shall not meet him."—"Why so, sir?" answered Booth. "I will not meet him," replied the doctor. "Shall I meet a man who pretends to know more than the whole College, and would overturn the whole method of practice, which is so well established, and from which no one person hath pretended to deviate?" "Indeed, sir," cries the apothecary, "you do not know what you are about, asking your pardon; why, he kills everybody he comes near." "That is not true," said Mrs. Ellison. "I have been his patient twice, and I am alive yet." "You have had good luck, then, madam," answered the apothecary, "for he kills everybody he comes near." "Nay, I know above a dozen others of my own acquaintance," replied Mrs. Ellison, "who have all been cured by him." "That may be, madam," cries Arsenic; "but he kills everybody for all that—why, madam, did you never hear of Mr. ——? I can't think of the gentleman's name, though he was a man of great fashion; but everybody knows whom I mean." "Everybody, indeed, must know whom you mean," answered Mrs. Ellison; "for I never heard but of one, and that many years ago."

Before the dispute was ended, the doctor himself entered the room. As he was a very well-bred and very good-natured man, he addressed himself with

Digitized by Google

much civility to his brother physician, who was not quite so courteous on his side. However, he suffered the newcomer to be conducted to the sick-bed, and at Booth's earnest request to deliver his opinion.

The dispute which ensued between the two physicians would, perhaps, be unintelligible to any but those of the faculty, and not very entertaining to them. The character which the officer and Mrs. Ellison had given of the second doctor had greatly prepossessed Booth in his favour, and indeed his reasoning seemed to be the juster. Booth therefore declared that he would abide by his advice, upon which the former operator, with his zany, the apothecary, quitted the field, and left the other in full possession of the sick.

The first thing the new doctor did was (to use his own phrase) to blow up the physical magazine. All the powders and potions instantly disappeared at his command; for he said there was a much readier and nearer way to convey such stuff to the vault, than by first sending it through the human body. He then ordered the child to be blooded, gave it a clyster and some cooling physic, and, in short (that I may not dwell too long on so unpleasing a part of history), within three days cured the little patient of her distemper, to the great satisfaction of Mrs. Ellison, and to the vast joy of Amelia.

Some readers will, perhaps, think this whole chapter might have been omitted; but though it contains no great matter of amusement, it may at least serve to inform posterity concerning the present state of physic.]

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER TWO

IN WHICH BOOTH PAYS A VISIT TO THE NOBLE LORD.

WHEN that day of the week returned in which Mr. Booth chose to walk abroad, he went to wait on the noble peer, according to his kind invitation.

Booth now found a very different reception with this great man's porter from what he had met with at his friend the colonel's. He no sooner told his name than the porter with a bow told him his lordship was at home: the door immediately flew wide open, and he was conducted to an ante-chamber, where a servant told him he would acquaint his lordship with his arrival. Nor did he wait many minutes before the same servant returned and ushered him to his lordship's apartment.

He found my lord alone, and was received by him in the most courteous manner imaginable. After the first ceremonials were over, his lordship began in the following words: "Mr. Booth, I do assure you, you are very much obliged to my cousin Ellison. She hath given you such a character, that I shall have a pleasure in doing anything in my power to serve you. — But it will be very difficult, I am afraid, to get you a rank at home. In the West Indies, perhaps, or in some regiment abroad, it may be more easy; and, when I consider your reputation as a

Digitized by Google

soldier, I make no doubt of your readiness to go to any place where the service of your country shall call you." Booth answered, "That he was highly obliged to his lordship, and assured him he would with great chearfulness attend his duty in any part of the world. The only thing grievous in the exchange of countries," said he, "in my opinion, is to leave those I love behind me, and I am sure I shall never have a second trial equal to my first. It was very hard, my lord, to leave a young wife big with her first child, and so affected with my absence, that I had the utmost reason to despair of ever seeing her more. After such a demonstration of my resolution to sacrifice every other consideration to my duty, I hope your lordship will honour me with some confidence that I shall make no objection to serve in any country."—"My dear Mr. Booth," answered the lord, "you speak like a soldier, and I greatly honour your sentiments. Indeed, I own the justice of your inference from the example you have given; for to quit a wife, as you say, in the very infancy of marriage, is, I acknowledge, some trial of resolution." Booth answered with a low bow; and then, after some immaterial conversation, his lordship promised to speak immediately to the minister, and appointed Mr. Booth to come to him again on the Wednesday morning, that he might be acquainted with his patron's success. The poor man now blushed and looked silly, till, after some time, he summoned up all his courage to his assistance, and relying on the other's friendship, he opened the whole affair of his circumstances, and confessed that he did not dare

Digitized by Google

stir from his lodgings above one day in seven. His lordship expressed great concern at this account, and very kindly promised to take some opportunity of calling on him at his cousin Ellison's, when he hoped, he said, to bring him comfortable tidings.

Booth soon afterwards took his leave with the most profuse acknowledgments for so much goodness, and hastened home to acquaint his Amelia with what had so greatly overjoyed him. She highly congratulated him on his having found so generous and powerful a friend, towards whom both their bosoms burnt with the warmest sentiments of gratitude. She was not, however, contented till she had made Booth renew his promise, in the most solemn manner, of taking her with him. After which they sat down with their little children to a scrag of mutton and broth, with the highest satisfaction, and very heartily drank his lordship's health in a pot of porter.

In the afternoon this happy couple, if the reader will allow me to call poor people happy, drank tea with Mrs. Ellison, where his lordship's praises, being again repeated by both the husband and wife, were very loudly echoed by Mrs. Ellison. While they were here, the young lady whom we have mentioned at the end of the last book to have made a fourth at whist, and with whom Amelia seemed so much pleased, came in; she was just returned to town from a short visit in the country, and her present visit was unexpected. It was, however, very agreeable to Amelia, who liked her still better upon a second interview, and was resolved to solicit her further acquaintance.

Digitized by Google

Mrs. Bennet still maintained some little reserve, but was much more familiar and communicative than before. She appeared, moreover, to be as little ceremonious as Mrs. Ellison had reported her, and very readily accepted Amelia's apology for not paying her the first visit, and agreed to drink tea with her the very next afternoon.

Whilst the above-mentioned company were sitting in Mrs. Ellison's parlour, serjeant Atkinson passed by the window and knocked at the door. Mrs. Ellison no sooner saw him than she said, "Pray, Mr. Booth, who is that genteel young serjeant? he was here every day last week to enquire after you." This was indeed a fact; the serjeant was apprehensive of the design of Murphy; but, as the poor fellow had received all his answers from the maid of Mrs. Ellison, Booth had never heard a word of the matter. He was, however, greatly pleased with what he was now told, and burst forth into great praises of the serjeant, which were seconded by Amelia, who added that he was her foster-brother, and, she believed, one of the honestest fellows in the world.

"And I 'll swear," cries Mrs. Ellison, "he is one of the prettiest. Do, Mr. Booth, desire him to walk in. A serjeant of the guards is a gentleman; and I had rather give such a man as you describe a dish of tea than any Beau Fribble of them all."

Booth wanted no great solicitation to shew any kind of regard to Atkinson; and, accordingly, the serjeant was ushered in, though not without some reluctance on his side. There is, perhaps, nothing more uneasy than those sensations which the French

Digitized by Google

call the *mauvaise honte*, nor any more difficult to conquer; and poor Atkinson would, I am persuaded, have mounted a breach with less concern than he shewed in walking across a room before three ladies, two of whom were his avowed well-wishers.

Though I do not entirely agree with the late learned Mr. Essex, the celebrated dancing-master's opinion, that dancing is the rudiment of polite education, as he would, I apprehend, exclude every other art and science, yet it is certain that persons whose feet have never been under the hands of the professors of that art are apt to discover this want in their education in every motion, nay, even when they stand or sit still. They seem, indeed, to be overburthened with limbs which they know not how to use, as if, when Nature hath finished her work, the dancing-master still is necessary to put it in motion.

Atkinson was, at present, an example of this observation which doth so much honour to a profession for which I have a very high regard. He was handsome, and exquisitely well made; and yet, as he had never learnt to dance, he made so awkward an appearance in Mrs. Ellison's parlour, that the good lady herself, who had invited him in, could at first scarce refrain from laughter at his behaviour. He had not, however, been long in the room before admiration of his person got the better of such risible ideas. So great is the advantage of beauty in men as well as women, and so sure is this quality in either sex of procuring some regard from the beholder.

The exceeding courteous behaviour of Mrs. Elli-

Digitized by Google

son, joined to that of Amelia and Booth, at length dissipated the uneasiness of Atkinson; and he gained sufficient confidence to tell the company some entertaining stories of accidents that had happened in the army within his knowledge, which, though they greatly pleased all present, are not, however, of consequence enough to have a place in this history.

Mrs. Ellison was so very importunate with her company to stay supper that they all consented. As for the serjeant, he seemed to be none of the least welcome guests. She was, indeed, so pleased with what she had heard of him, and what she saw of him, that, when a little warmed with wine, for she was no flincher at the bottle, she began to indulge some freedoms in her discourse towards him that a little offended Amelia's delicacy, nay, they did not seem to be highly relished by the other lady; though I am far from insinuating that these exceeded the bounds of decorum, or were, indeed, greater liberties than ladies of the middle age, and especially widows, do frequently allow to themselves.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER THREE

RELATING PRINCIPALLY TO THE AFFAIRS OF SERJEANT ATKINSON.

THE next day, when all the same company, Atkinson only excepted, assembled in Amelia's apartment, Mrs. Ellison presently began to discourse of him, and that in terms not only of approbation but even of affection. She called him her clever serjeant, and her dear serjeant, repeated often that he was the prettiest fellow in the army, and said it was a thousand pities he had not a commission; for that, if he had, she was sure he would become a general.

"I am of your opinion, madam," answered Booth; "and he hath got one hundred pounds of his own already, if he could find a wife now to help him to two or three hundred more, I think he might easily get a commission in a marching regiment; for I am convinced there is no colonel in the army would refuse him."

"Refuse him, indeed!" said Mrs. Ellison; "no; he would be a very pretty colonel that did. And, upon my honour, I believe there are very few ladies who would refuse him, if he had but a proper opportunity of soliciting them. The colonel and the lady both would be better off than with one of those

Digitized by Google

pretty masters that I see walking about, and dragging their long swords after them, when they should rather drag their leading-strings."

"Well said," cries Booth, "and spoken like a woman of spirit. — Indeed, I believe they would be both better served."

"True, captain," answered Mrs. Ellison; "I would rather leave the two first syllables out of the word gentleman than the last."

"Nay, I assure you," replied Booth, "there is not a quieter creature in the world. Though the fellow hath the bravery of a lion, he hath the meekness of a lamb. I can tell you stories enow of that kind, and so can my dear Amelia, when he was a boy."

"O! if the match sticks there," cries Amelia, "I positively will not spoil his fortune by my silence. I can answer for him from his infancy, that he was one of the best-natured lads in the world. I will tell you a story or two of him, the truth of which I can testify from my own knowledge. When he was but six years old he was at play with me at my mother's house, and a great pointer-dog bit him through the leg. The poor lad, in the midst of the anguish of his wound, declared he was overjoyed it had not happened to miss (for the same dog had just before snapt at me, and my petticoats had been my defence). —— Another instance of his goodness, which greatly recommended him to my father, and which I have loved him for ever since, was this: my father was a great lover of birds, and strictly forbad the spoiling of their nests. Poor Joe was one day caught upon a tree, and, being concluded guilty,

Digitized by Google

was severely lashed for it; but it was afterwards discovered that another boy, a friend of Joe's, had robbed the nest of its young ones, and poor Joe had climbed the tree in order to restore them, notwithstanding which, he submitted to the punishment rather than he would impeach his companion. But, if these stories appear childish and trifling, the duty and kindness he hath shewn to his mother must recommend him to every one. Ever since he hath been fifteen years old he hath more than half supported her: and when my brother died, I remember particularly, Joe, at his desire, for he was much his favourite, had one of his suits given him; but, instead of his becoming finer on that occasion, another young fellow came to church in my brother's cloaths, and my old nurse appeared the same Sunday in a new gown, which her son had purchased for her with the sale of his legacy."

"Well, I protest, he is a very worthy creature," said Mrs. Bennet.

"He is a charming fellow," cries Mrs. Ellison — "but then the name of serjeant, Captain Booth; there, as the play says, my pride brings me off again."

> And whatsoever the sages charge on pride,
> The angels' fall, and twenty other good faults beside;
> On earth I 'm sure — I 'm sure — something — calling
> Pride saves man, and our sex too, from falling. —

Here a footman's rap at the door shook the room. Upon which Mrs. Ellison, running to the window, cried out, "Let me die if it is not my lord! what shall I do? I must be at home to him; but sup-

Digitized by Google

pose he should enquire for you, captain, what shall I say? or will you go down with me?"

The company were in some confusion at this instant, and before they had agreed on anything, Booth's little girl came running into the room, and said, "There was a prodigious great gentleman coming up-stairs." She was immediately followed by his lordship, who, as he knew Booth must be at home, made very little or no enquiry at the door.

Amelia was taken somewhat at a surprize, but she was too polite to shew much confusion; for, though she knew nothing of the town, she had had a genteel education, and kept the best company the country afforded. The ceremonies therefore past as usual, and they all sat down.

His lordship soon addressed himself to Booth, saying, "As I have what I think good news for you, sir, I could not delay giving myself the pleasure of communicating it to you. I have mentioned your affair where I promised you, and I have no doubt of my success. One may easily perceive, you know, from the manner of people's behaving upon such occasions; and, indeed, when I related your case, I found there was much inclination to serve you. Great men, Mr. Booth, must do things in their own time; but I think you may depend on having something done very soon."

Booth made many acknowledgments for his lordship's goodness, and now a second time paid all the thanks which would have been due, even had the favour been obtained. This art of promising is the economy of a great man's pride, a sort of good

Digitized by Google

husbandry in conferring favours, by which they receive tenfold in acknowledgments for every obligation, I mean among those who really intend the service; for there are others who cheat poor men of their thanks, without ever designing to deserve them at all.

This matter being sufficiently discussed, the conversation took a gayer turn; and my lord began to entertain the ladies with some of that elegant discourse which, though most delightful to hear, it is impossible should ever be read.

His lordship was so highly pleased with Amelia, that he could not help being somewhat particular to her; but this particularity distinguished itself only in a higher degree of respect, and was so very polite, and so very distant, that she herself was pleased, and at his departure, which was not till he had far exceeded the length of a common visit, declared he was the finest gentleman she had ever seen; with which sentiment her husband and Mrs. Ellison both entirely concurred.

Mrs. Bennet, on the contrary, exprest some little dislike to my lord's complaisance, which she called excessive. "For my own part," said she, "I have not the least relish for those very fine gentlemen; what the world generally calls politeness, I term insincerity; and I am more charmed with the stories which Mrs. Booth told us of the honest serjeant than with all that the finest gentlemen in the world ever said in their lives!"

"O! to be sure," cries Mrs. Ellison; "*All for Love, or the World well Lost*, is a motto very proper

Digitized by Google

for some folks to wear in their coat of arms; but the generality of the world will, I believe, agree with that lady's opinion of my cousin, rather than with Mrs. Bennet."

Mrs. Bennet, seeing Mrs. Ellison took offence at what she said, thought proper to make some apology, which was very readily accepted, and so ended the visit.

We cannot however put an end to the chapter without observing that such is the ambitious temper of beauty, that it may always apply to itself that celebrated passage in Lucan,

Nec quenquam jam ferre potest Cæsarve priorem,
Pompeiusve parem.

Indeed, I believe, it may be laid down as a general rule, that no woman who hath any great pretensions to admiration is ever well pleased in a company where she perceives herself to fill only the second place. This observation, however, I humbly submit to the judgment of the ladies, and hope it will be considered as retracted by me if they shall dissent from my opinion.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER FOUR

CONTAINING MATTERS THAT REQUIRE NO PREFACE.

WHEN Booth and his wife were left alone together they both extremely exulted in their good fortune in having found so good a friend as his lordship; nor were they wanting in very warm expressions of gratitude towards Mrs. Ellison. After which they began to lay down schemes of living when Booth should have his commission of captain; and, after the exactest computation, concluded that, with œconomy, they should be able to save at least fifty pounds a-year out of their income in order to pay their debts.

These matters being well settled, Amelia asked Booth what he thought of Mrs. Bennet? "I think, my dear," answered Booth, "that she hath been formerly a very pretty woman." "I am mistaken," replied she, "if she be not a very good creature. I don't know I ever took such a liking to any one on so short an acquaintance. I fancy she hath been a very spritely woman; for, if you observe, she discovers by starts a great vivacity in her countenance." "I made the same observation," cries Booth: "sure some strange misfortune hath befallen her." "A misfortune, indeed!" answered Amelia; "sure, child,

Digitized by Google

you forget what Mrs. Ellison told us, that she had lost a beloved husband. A misfortune which I have often wondered at any woman's surviving." At which words she cast a tender look at Booth, and presently afterwards, throwing herself upon his neck, cried, "O, Heavens! what a happy creature am I! when I consider the dangers you have gone through, how I exult in my bliss!" The good-natured reader will suppose that Booth was not deficient in returning such tenderness, after which the conversation became too fond to be here related.

The next morning Mrs. Ellison addressed herself to Booth as follows: "I shall make no apology, sir, for what I am going to say, as it proceeds from my friendship to yourself and your dear lady. I am convinced then, sir, there is a something more than accident in your going abroad only one day in the week. Now, sir, if, as I am afraid, matters are not altogether as well as I wish them, I beg, since I do not believe you are provided with a lawyer, that you will suffer me to recommend one to you. The person I shall mention is, I assure you, of much ability in his profession, and I have known him do great services to gentlemen under a cloud. Do not be ashamed of your circumstances, my dear friend: they are a much greater scandal to those who have left so much merit unprovided for."

Booth gave Mrs. Ellison abundance of thanks for her kindness, and explicitly confessed to her that her conjectures were right, and, without hesitation, accepted the offer of her friend's assistance.

Mrs. Ellison then acquainted him with her appre-

Digitized by Google

hensions on his account. She said she had both yesterday and this morning seen two or three very ugly suspicious fellows pass several times by her window. "Upon all accounts," said she, "my dear sir, I advise you to keep yourself close confined till the lawyer hath been with you. I am sure he will get you your liberty, at least of walking about within the verge. There 's something to be done with the board of green-cloth; I don't know what; but this I know, that several gentlemen have lived here a long time very comfortably, and have defied all the vengeance of their creditors. However, in the mean time, you must be a close prisoner with your lady; and I believe there is no man in England but would exchange his liberty for the same gaol."

She then departed in order to send for the attorney, and presently afterwards the serjeant arrived with news of the like kind. He said he had scraped an acquaintance with Murphy. "I hope your honour will pardon me," cries Atkinson, "but I pretended to have a small demand upon your honour myself, and offered to employ him in the business. Upon which he told me that, if I would go with him to the Marshal's court, and make affidavit of my debt, he should be able very shortly to get it me; 'for I shall have the captain in hold,' cries he, 'within a day or two.' I wish," said the serjeant, "I could do your honour any service. Shall I walk about all day before the door? or shall I be porter, and watch it in the inside till your honour can find some means of securing yourself? I hope you will not be offended at me, but I beg you would take care of falling into

Digitized by Google

Murphy's hands; for he hath the character of the greatest villain upon earth. I am afraid you will think me too bold, sir; but I have a little money; if it can be of any service, do, pray your honour, command it. It can never do me so much good any other way. Consider, sir, I owe all I have to yourself and my dear mistress."

Booth stood a moment, as if he had been thunderstruck, and then, the tears bursting from his eyes, he said, "Upon my soul, Atkinson, you overcome me. I scarce ever heard of so much goodness, nor do I know how to express my sentiments of it. But, be assured, as for your money, I will not accept it; and let it satisfy you, that in my present circumstances it would do me no essential service; but this be assured of likewise, that whilst I live I shall never forget the kindness of the offer. However, as I apprehend I may be in some danger of fellows getting into the house, for a day or two, as I have no guard but a poor little girl, I will not refuse the goodness you offer to shew in my protection. And I make no doubt but Mrs. Ellison will let you sit in her parlour for that purpose."

Atkinson, with the utmost readiness, undertook the office of porter; and Mrs. Ellison as readily allotted him a place in her back-parlour, where he continued three days together, from eight in the morning till twelve at night; during which time, he had sometimes the company of Mrs. Ellison, and sometimes of Booth, Amelia, and Mrs. Bennet too; for this last had taken as great a fancy to Amelia as Amelia had to her, and, therefore, as Mr. Booth's affairs were

Digitized by Google

now no secret in the neighbourhood, made her frequent visits during the confinement of her husband, and consequently her own.

Nothing, as I remember, happened in this interval of time, more worthy notice than the following card which Amelia received from her old acquaintance Mrs. James: — "Mrs. James sends her compliments to Mrs. Booth, and desires to know how she does; for, as she hath not had the favour of seeing her at her own house, or of meeting her in any public place, in so long time, fears it may be owing to ill health."

Amelia had long given over all thoughts of her friend, and doubted not but that she was as entirely given over by her; she was very much surprized at this message, and under some doubt whether it was not meant as an insult, especially from the mention of public places, which she thought so inconsistent with her present circumstances, of which she supposed Mrs. James was well apprized. However, at the entreaty of her husband, who languished for nothing more than to be again reconciled to his friend James, Amelia undertook to pay the lady a visit, and to examine into the mystery of this conduct, which appeared to her so unaccountable.

Mrs. James received her with a degree of civility that amazed Amelia no less than her coldness had done before. She resolved to come to an eclaircissement, and, having sat out some company that came in, when they were alone together Amelia, after some silence and many offers to speak, at last said, "My dear Jenny (if you will now suffer me to call you by so familiar a name), have you entirely forgot a certain

Digitized by Google

young lady who had the pleasure of being your intimate acquaintance at Montpelier?" "Whom do you mean, dear madam?" cries Mrs. James with great concern. "I mean myself," answered Amelia. "You surprize me, madam," replied Mrs. James: "how can you ask me that question?" "Nay, my dear, I do not intend to offend you," cries Amelia, "but I am really desirous to solve to myself the reason of that coldness which you shewed me when you did me the favour of a visit. Can you think, my dear, I was not disappointed, when I expected to meet an intimate friend, to receive a cold formal visitant? I desire you to examine your own heart and answer me honestly if you do not think I had some little reason to be dissatisfied with your behaviour?" "Indeed, Mrs. Booth," answered the other lady, "you surprize me very much; if there was anything displeasing to you in my behaviour I am extremely concerned at it. I did not know I had been defective in any of the rules of civility, but if I was, madam, I ask your pardon." "Is civility, then, my dear," replied Amelia, "a synonymous term with friendship? Could I have expected, when I parted the last time with Miss Jenny Bath, to have met her the next time in the shape of a fine lady, complaining of the hardship of climbing up two pair of stairs to visit me, and then approaching me with the distant air of a new or a slight acquaintance? Do you think, my dear Mrs. James, if the tables had been turned, if my fortune had been as high in the world as yours, and you in my distress and abject condition, that I would not have climbed as high as the monument to visit you?"

Digitized by Google

"Sure, madam," cried Mrs. James, "I mistake you, or you have greatly mistaken me. Can you complain of my not visiting you, who have owed me a visit almost these three weeks? Nay, did I not even then send you a card, which sure was doing more than all the friendship and good-breeding in the world required; but, indeed, as I had met you in no public place, I really thought you was ill."

"How can you mention public places to me," said Amelia, "when you can hardly be a stranger to my present situation? Did you not know, madam, that I was ruined?" "No, indeed, madam, did I not," replied Mrs. James; "I am sure I should have been highly concerned if I had." "Why, sure, my dear," cries Amelia, "you could not imagine that we were in affluent circumstances, when you found us in such a place, and in such a condition." "Nay, my dear," answered Mrs. James, "since you are pleased to mention it first yourself, I own I was a little surprized to see you in no better lodgings; but I concluded you had your own reasons for liking them; and, for my own part, I have laid it down as a positive rule never to enquire into the private affairs of any one, especially of my friends. I am not of the humour of some ladies, who confine the circle of their acquaintance to one part of the town, and would not be known to visit in the city for the world. For my part, I never dropt an acquaintance with any one while it was reputable to keep it up; and I can solemnly declare I have not a friend in the world for whom I have a greater esteem than I have for Mrs. Booth."

At this instant the arrival of a new visitant put

Digitized by Google

an end to the discourse; and Amelia soon after took her leave without the least anger, but with some little unavoidable contempt for a lady, in whose opinion, as we have hinted before, outward form and ceremony constituted the whole essence of friendship; who valued all her acquaintance alike, as each individual served equally to fill up a place in her visiting roll; and who, in reality, had not the least concern for the good qualities or well-being of any of them.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER FIVE

CONTAINING MUCH HEROIC MATTER.

AT the end of three days Mrs. Ellison's friend had so far purchased Mr. Booth's liberty that he could walk again abroad within the verge without any danger of having a warrant backed against him by the board before he had notice. As for the ill-looked persons that had given the alarm, it was now discovered that another unhappy gentleman, and not Booth, was the object of their pursuit.

Mr. Booth, now being delivered from his fears, went, as he had formerly done, to take his morning walk in the Park. Here he met Colonel Bath in company with some other officers, and very civilly paid his respects to him. But, instead of returning the salute, the colonel looked him full in the face with a very stern countenance; and, if he could be said to take any notice of him, it was in such a manner as to inform him he would take no notice of him.

Booth was not more hurt than surprized at this behaviour, and resolved to know the reason of it. He therefore watched an opportunity till the colonel was alone, and then walked boldly up to him, and desired to know if he had given him any offence?

Digitized by Google

The colonel answered hastily, "Sir, I am above being offended with you, nor do I think it consistent with my dignity to make you any answer." Booth replied, "I don't know, sir, that I have done anything to deserve this treatment." "Look'ee, sir," cries the colonel, "if I had not formerly had some respect for you, I should not think you worth my resentment. However, as you are a gentleman born, and an officer, and as I have had an esteem for you, I will give you some marks of it by putting it in your power to do yourself justice. I will tell you therefore, sir, that you have acted like a scoundrel." "If we were not in the Park," answered Booth warmly, "I would thank you very properly for that compliment." "O, sir," cries the colonel, "we can be soon in a convenient place." Upon which Booth answered, he would attend him wherever he pleased. The colonel then bid him come along, and strutted forward directly up Constitution-hill to Hyde-park, Booth following him at first, and afterwards walking before him, till they came to that place which may be properly called the field of blood, being that part, a little to the left of the ring, which heroes have chosen for the scene of their exit out of this world.

Booth reached the ring some time before the colonel; for he mended not his pace any more than a Spaniard. To say truth, I believe it was not in his power: for he had so long accustomed himself to one and the same strut, that as a horse, used always to trotting, can scarce be forced into a gallop, so could no passion force the colonel to alter his pace.

Digitized by Google

At length, however, both parties arrived at the lists, where the colonel very deliberately took off his wig and coat, and laid them on the grass, and then, drawing his sword, advanced to Booth, who had likewise his drawn weapon in his hand, but had made no other preparation for the combat.

The combatants now engaged with great fury, and, after two or three passes, Booth run the colonel through the body and threw him on the ground, at the same time possessing himself of the colonel's sword.

As soon as the colonel was become master of his speech, he called out to Booth in a very kind voice, and said, "You have done my business, and satisfied me that you are a man of honour, and that my brother James must have been mistaken; for I am convinced that no man who will draw his sword in so gallant a manner is capable of being a rascal. D—n me, give me a buss, my dear boy; I ask your pardon for that infamous appellation I dishonoured your dignity with; but d—n me if it was not purely out of love, and to give you an opportunity of doing yourself justice, which I own you have done like a man of honour. What may be the consequence I know not, but I hope, at least, I shall live to reconcile you with my brother."

Booth shewed great concern, and even horror in his countenance. "Why, my dear colonel," said he, "would you force me to this? for Heaven's sake tell me what I have ever done to offend you."

"Me!" cried the colonel. "Indeed, my dear child, you never did anything to offend me. — Nay,

Digitized by Google

I have acted the part of a friend to you in the whole affair. I maintained your cause with my brother as long as decency would permit; I could not flatly contradict him, though, indeed, I scarce believed him. But what could I do? If I had not fought with you, I must have been obliged to have fought with him; however, I hope what is done will be sufficient, and that matters may be discomodated without your being put to the necessity of fighting any more on this occasion."

"Never regard me," cried Booth eagerly; "for Heaven's sake, think of your own preservation. Let me put you into a chair, and get you a surgeon."

"Thou art a noble lad," cries the colonel, who was now got on his legs, "and I am glad the business is so well over; for, though your sword went quite through, it slanted so that I apprehend there is little danger of life: however, I think there is enough done to put an honourable end to the affair, especially as you was so hasty to disarm me. I bleed a little, but I can walk to the house by the water; and, if you will send me a chair thither, I shall be obliged to you."

As the colonel refused any assistance (indeed he was very able to walk without it, though with somewhat less dignity than usual), Booth set forward to Grosvenor-gate, in order to procure the chair, and soon after returned with one to his friend; whom having conveyed into it, he attended himself on foot into Bond-street, where then lived a very eminent surgeon.

The surgeon having probed the wound, turned

Digitized by Google

towards Booth, who was apparently the guilty person, and said, with a smile, "Upon my word, sir, you have performed the business with great dexterity."

"Sir," cries the colonel to the surgeon, "I would not have you imagine I am afraid to die. I think I know more what belongs to the dignity of a man; and, I believe, I have shewn it at the head of a line of battle. Do not impute my concern to that fear, when I ask you whether there is or is not any danger?"

"Really, colonel," answered the surgeon, who well knew the complexion of the gentleman then under his hands, "it would appear like presumption to say that a man who hath been just run through the body is in no manner of danger. But this I think I may assure you, that I yet perceive no very bad symptoms, and, unless something worse should appear, or a fever be the consequence, I hope you may live to be again, with all your dignity, at the head of a line of battle."

"I am glad to hear that is your opinion," quoth the colonel, "for I am not desirous of dying, though I am not afraid of it. But, if anything worse than you apprehend should happen, I desire you will be a witness of my declaration that this young gentleman is entirely innocent. I forced him to do what he did. My dear Booth, I am pleased matters are as they are. You are the first man that ever gained an advantage over me; but it was very lucky for you that you disarmed me, and I doubt not but you have the equanimity to think so. If the business, therefore, hath ended without doing anything to the

Digitized by Google

purpose, it was Fortune's pleasure, and neither of our faults."

Booth heartily embraced the colonel, and assured him of the great satisfaction he had received from the surgeon's opinion; and soon after the two combatants took their leave of each other. The colonel, after he was drest, went in a chair to his lodgings, and Booth walked on foot to his; where he luckily arrived without meeting any of Mr. Murphy's gang; a danger which never once occurred to his imagination till he was out of it.

The affair he had been about had indeed so entirely occupied his mind, that it had obliterated every other idea; among the rest, it caused him so absolutely to forget the time of the day, that, though he had exceeded the time of dining above two hours, he had not the least suspicion of being at home later than usual.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER SIX

IN WHICH THE READER WILL FIND MATTER WORTHY HIS CONSIDERATION.

AMELIA, having waited above an hour for her husband, concluded, as he was the most punctual man alive, that he had met with some engagement abroad, and sat down to her meal with her children; which, as it was always uncomfortable in the absence of her husband, was very short; so that, before his return, all the apparatus of dining was entirely removed.

Booth sat some time with his wife, expecting every minute when the little maid would make her appearance; at last, curiosity, I believe, rather than appetite, made him ask how long it was to dinner? "To dinner, my dear!" answered Amelia; "sure you have dined, I hope?" Booth replied in the negative; upon which his wife started from her chair, and bestirred herself as nimbly to provide him a repast as the most industrious hostess in the kingdom doth when some unexpected guest of extraordinary quality arrives at her house.

The reader hath not, I think, from any passages hitherto recorded in this history, had much reason to accuse Amelia of a blameable curiosity; he will not, I hope, conclude that she gave an instance of

Digitized by Google

any such fault when, upon Booth's having so long overstayed his time, and so greatly mistaken the hour of the day, and upon some other circumstances of his behaviour (for he was too honest to be good at concealing any of his thoughts), she said to him after he had done eating, "My dear, I am sure something more than ordinary hath happened to-day, and I beg you will tell me what it is."

Booth answered that nothing of any consequence had happened; that he had been detained by a friend, whom he met accidently, longer than he expected. In short, he made many shuffling and evasive answers, not boldly lying out, which, perhaps, would have succeeded, but poorly and vainly endeavouring to reconcile falsehood with truth; an attempt which seldom fails to betray the most practised deceiver.

How impossible was it therefore for poor Booth to succeed in an art for which nature had so entirely disqualified him. His countenance, indeed, confessed faster than his tongue denied, and the whole of his behaviour gave Amelia an alarm, and made her suspect something very bad had happened; and, as her thoughts turned presently on the badness of their circumstances, she feared some mischief from his creditors had befallen him; for she was too ignorant of such matters to know that, if he had fallen into the hands of the Philistines (which is the name given by the faithful to bailiffs), he would hardly have been able so soon to recover his liberty. Booth at last perceived her to be so uneasy, that, as he saw no hopes of contriving any fiction to satisfy her, he

Digitized by Google

thought himself obliged to tell her the truth, or at least part of the truth, and confessed that he had had a little skirmish with Colonel Bath, in which, he said, the colonel had received a slight wound, not at all dangerous; "and this," says he, "is all the whole matter." "If it be so," cries Amelia, "I thank Heaven no worse hath happened; but why, my dear, will you ever converse with that madman, who can embrace a friend one moment, and fight with him the next?" "Nay, my dear," answered Booth, "you yourself must confess, though he be a little too much on the *qui vive*, he is a man of great honour and good-nature." "Tell me not," replied she, "of such good-nature and honour as would sacrifice a friend and a whole family to a ridiculous whim. Oh, Heavens!" cried she, falling upon her knees, "from what misery have I escaped, from what have these poor babes escaped, through your gracious providence this day!" Then turning to her husband, she cried, "But are you sure the monster's wound is no more dangerous than you say? a monster surely I may call him, who can quarrel with a man that could not, that I am convinced would not, offend him."

Upon this question, Booth repeated the assurances which the surgeon had given them, perhaps with a little enlargement, which pretty well satisfied Amelia; and instead of blaming her husband for what he had done, she tenderly embraced him, and again returned thanks to Heaven for his safety.

In the evening Booth insisted on paying a short visit to the colonel, highly against the inclination of

Digitized by Google

Amelia, who, by many arguments and entreaties, endeavoured to dissuade her husband from continuing an acquaintance in which, she said, she should always foresee much danger for the future. However, she was at last prevailed upon to acquiesce; and Booth went to the colonel, whose lodgings happened to be in the verge as well as his own.

He found the colonel in his night-gown, and his great chair, engaged with another officer at a game of chess. He rose immediately, and, having heartily embraced Booth, presented him to his friend, saying, he had the honour to introduce to him as brave and as *fortitudinous* a man as any in the king's dominions. He then took Booth with him into the next room, and desired him not to mention a word of what had happened in the morning; saying, "I am very well satisfied that no more hath happened; however, as it ended in nothing, I could wish it might remain a secret." Booth told him he was heartily glad to find him so well, and promised never to mention it more to any one.

The game at chess being but just begun, and neither of the parties having gained any considerable advantage, they neither of them insisted on continuing it; and now the colonel's antagonist took his leave and left the colonel and Booth together.

As soon as they were alone, the latter earnestly entreated the former to acquaint him with the real cause of his anger; "for may I perish," cries Booth, "if I can even guess what I have ever done to offend either you, or your brother, Colonel James."

"Look'ee, child," cries the colonel; "I tell you I

Digitized by Google

am for my own part satisfied; for I am convinced that a man who will fight can never be a rascal; and, therefore, why should you enquire any more of me at present? when I see my brother James, I hope to reconcile all matters, and perhaps no more swords need be drawn on this occasion." But Booth still persisting in his desire, the colonel, after some hesitation, with a tremendous oath, cried out, "I do not think myself at liberty to refuse you after the indignity I offered you; so, since you demand it of me, I will inform you. My brother told me you had used him dishonourably, and had divellicated his character behind his back. He gave me his word, too, that he was well assured of what he said. What could I have done? though I own to you I did not believe him, and your behaviour since hath convinced me I was in the right; I must either have given him the lye, and fought with him, or else I was obliged to behave as I did, and fight with you. And now, my lad, I leave it to you to do as you please; but, if you are laid under any necessity to do yourself further justice, it is your own fault."

"Alas! colonel," answered Booth, "besides the obligations I have to the colonel, I have really so much love for him, that I think of nothing less than resentment. All I wish is to have this affair brought to an eclaircissement, and to satisfy him that he is in an error; for, though his assertions are cruelly injurious, and I have never deserved them, yet I am convinced he would not say what he did not himself think. Some rascal, envious of his friendship for me, hath belyed me to him; and the only

Digitized by Google

resentment I desire is, to convince him of his mistake."

At these words the colonel grinned horribly a ghastly smile, or rather sneer, and answered, "Young gentleman, you may do as you please; but, by the eternal dignity of man, if any man breathing had taken a liberty with my character — Here, here — Mr. Booth" (shewing his fingers), "here d—n me, should be his nostrils; he should breathe through my hands, and breathe his last, d—n me."

Booth answered, "I think, colonel, I may appeal to your testimony that I dare do myself justice; since he who dare draw his sword against you can hardly be supposed to fear any other person; but I repeat to you again that I love Colonel James so well, and am so greatly obliged to him, that it would be almost indifferent to me whether I directed my sword against his breast or my own."

The colonel's muscles were considerably softened by Booth's last speech; but he again contracted them into a vast degree of fierceness before he cried out — "Boy, thou hast reason enough to be vain; for thou art the first person that ever could proudly say he gained an advantage over me in combat. I believe, indeed, thou art not afraid of any man breathing, and, as I know thou hast some obligations to my brother, I do not discommend thee; for nothing more becomes the dignity of a man than gratitude. Besides, as I am satisfied my brother can produce the author of the slander — I say, I am satisfied of that — d—n me, if any man alive dares assert the contrary; for that would be to make my brother himself a

Digitized by Google

liar — I will make him produce his author; and then, my dear boy, your doing yourself proper justice there will bring you finely out of the whole affair. As soon as my surgeon gives me leave to go abroad, which, I hope, will be in a few days, I will bring my brother James to a tavern where you shall meet us; and I will engage my honour, my whole dignity to you, to make you friends."

The assurance of the colonel gave Booth great pleasure; for few persons ever loved a friend better than he did James; and as for doing military justice on the author of that scandalous report which had incensed his friend against him, not Bath himself was ever more ready, on such an occasion, than Booth to execute it. He soon after took his leave, and returned home in high spirits to his Amelia, whom he found in Mrs. Ellison's apartment, engaged in a party at ombre with that lady and her right honourable cousin.

His lordship had, it seems, had a second interview with the great man, and, having obtained further hopes (for I think there was not yet an absolute promise) of success in Mr. Booth's affairs, his usual good-nature brought him immediately to acquaint Mr. Booth with it. As he did not therefore find him at home, and as he met with the two ladies together, he resolved to stay till his friend's return, which he was assured would not be long, especially as he was so lucky, he said, to have no particular engagement that whole evening.

We remarked before that his lordship, at the first interview with Amelia, had distinguished her by a more particular address from the other ladies; but

Digitized by Google

that now appeared to be rather owing to his perfect good-breeding, as she was then to be considered as the mistress of the house, than from any other preference. His present behaviour made this still more manifest; for, as he was now in Mrs. Ellison's apartment, though she was his relation and an old acquaintance, he applied his conversation rather more to her than to Amelia. His eyes, indeed, were now and then guilty of the contrary distinction, but this was only by stealth; for they constantly withdrew the moment they were discovered. In short, he treated Amelia with the greatest distance, and at the same time with the most profound and awful respect; his conversation was so general, so lively, and so obliging, that Amelia, when she added to his agreeableness the obligations she had to him for his friendship to Booth, was certainly as much pleased with his lordship as any virtuous woman can possibly be with any man, besides her own husband.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONTAINING VARIOUS MATTERS.

WE have already mentioned the good-humour in which Booth returned home; and the reader will easily believe it was not a little encreased by the good-humour in which he found his company. My lord received him with the utmost marks of friendship and affection, and told him that his affairs went on as well almost as he himself could desire, and that he doubted not very soon to wish him joy of a company.

When Booth had made a proper return to all his lordship's unparalleled goodness, he whispered Amelia that the colonel was entirely out of danger, and almost as well as himself. This made her satisfaction complete, threw her into such spirits, and gave such a lustre to her eyes, that her face, as Horace says, was too dazzling to be looked at; it was certainly too handsome to be looked at without the highest admiration.

His lordship departed about ten o'clock, and left the company in raptures with him, especially the two ladies, of whom it is difficult to say which exceeded the other in his commendations. Mrs. Ellison swore she believed he was the best of all

Digitized by Google

humankind; and Amelia, without making any exception, declared he was the finest gentleman and most agreeable man she had ever seen in her life; adding, it was great pity he should remain single. "That 's true, indeed," cries Mrs. Ellison, "and I have often lamented it; nay, I am astonished at it, considering the great liking he always shews for our sex, and he may certainly have the choice of all. The real reason, I believe, is, his fondness for his sister's children. I declare, madam, if you was to see his behaviour to them, you would think they were his own. Indeed he is vastly fond of all manner of children." "Good creature!" cries Amelia; "if ever he doth me the honour of another visit I am resolved I will shew him my little things. I think, Mrs. Ellison, as you say my lord loves children, I may say, without vanity, he will not see many such." "No, indeed, will he not," answered Mrs. Ellison: "and now I think on't, madam, I wonder at my own stupidity in never making the offer before; but since you put it into my head, if you will give me leave, I 'll take master and miss to wait on my lord's nephew and niece. They are very pretty behaved children; and little master and miss will be, I dare swear, very happy in their acquaintance; besides, if my lord himself should see them, I know what will happen; for he is the most generous of all human beings."

Amelia very readily accepted the favour which Mrs. Ellison offered her; but Booth exprest some reluctance. "Upon my word, my dear," said he, with a smile, "this behaviour of ours puts me in

Digitized by Google

mind of the common conduct of beggars; who, whenever they receive a favour, are sure to send other objects to the same fountain of charity. Don't we, my dear, repay our obligations to my lord in the same manner, by sending our children a begging to him?"

"O beastly!" cries Mrs. Ellison; "how could such a thought enter your brains? I protest, madam, I begin to grow ashamed of this husband of yours. How can you have so vulgar a way of thinking? Begging, indeed! the poor little dear things a begging! If my lord was capable of such a thought, though he was my own brother instead of my cousin, I should scorn him too much ever to enter his doors." "O dear madam!" answered Amelia, "you take Mr. Booth too seriously, when he was only in jest; and the children shall wait upon you whenever you please."

Though Booth had been a little more in earnest than Amelia had represented him, and was not, perhaps, quite so much in the wrong as he was considered by Mrs. Ellison, yet, seeing there were two to one against him, he wisely thought proper to recede, and let his simile go off with that air of a jest which his wife had given it.

Mrs. Ellison, however, could not let it pass without paying some compliments to Amelia's understanding, nor without some obscure reflexions upon Booth, with whom she was more offended than the matter required. She was indeed a woman of most profuse generosity, and could not bear a thought which she deemed vulgar or sneaking. She after-

Digitized by Google

wards launched forth the most profuse encomiums of his lordship's liberality, and concluded the evening with some instances which he had given of that virtue which, if not the noblest, is, perhaps, one of the most useful to society with which great and rich men can be endowed.

The next morning early, serjeant Atkinson came to wait on lieutenant Booth, and desired to speak with his honour in private. Upon which the lieutenant and serjeant took a walk together in the Park. Booth expected every minute when the serjeant would open his mouth; under which expectation he continued till he came to the end of the mall, and so he might have continued till he came to the end of the world; for, though several words stood at the end of the serjeant's lips, there they were likely to remain for ever. He was, indeed, in the condition of a miser, whom a charitable impulse hath impelled to draw a few pence to the edge of his pocket, where they are altogether as secure as if they were in the bottom; for, as the one hath not the heart to part with a farthing, so neither had the other the heart to speak a word.

Booth at length, wondering that the serjeant did not speak, asked him, What his business was? when the latter with a stammering voice began the following apology: "I hope, sir, your honour will not be angry, nor take anything amiss of me. I do assure you, it was not of my seeking, nay, I dare not proceed in the matter without first asking your leave. Indeed, if I had taken any liberties from the goodness you have been pleased to shew me, I should

Digitized by Google

look upon myself as one of the most worthless and despicable of wretches; but nothing is farther from my thoughts. I know the distance which is between us; and, because your honour hath been so kind and good as to treat me with more familiarity than any other officer ever did, if I had been base enough to take any freedoms, or to encroach upon your honour's goodness, I should deserve to be whipt through the regiment. I hope, therefore, sir, you will not suspect me of any such attempt."

"What can all this mean, Atkinson?" cries Booth; "what mighty matter would you introduce with all this previous apology?"

"I am almost ashamed and afraid to mention it," answered the serjeant; "and yet I am sure your honour will believe what I have said, and not think anything owing to my own presumption; and, at the same time, I have no reason to think you would do anything to spoil my fortune in an honest way, when it is dropt into my lap without my own seeking. For may I perish if it is not all the lady's own goodness, and I hope in Heaven, with your honour's leave, I shall live to make her amends for it." In a word, that we may not detain the reader's curiosity quite so long as he did Booth's, he acquainted that gentleman that he had had an offer of marriage from a lady of his acquaintance, to whose company he had introduced him, and desired his permission to accept of it.

Booth must have been very dull indeed if, after what the serjeant had said, and after what he had heard Mrs. Ellison say, he had wanted any infor-

Digitized by Google

mation concerning the lady. He answered him briskly and chearfully, that he had his free consent to marry any woman whatever; "and the greater and richer she is," added he, "the more I shall be pleased with the match. I don't enquire who the lady is," said he, smiling, "but I hope she will make as good a wife as, I am convinced, her husband will deserve."

"Your honour hath been always too good to me," cries Atkinson; "but this I promise you, I will do all in my power to merit the kindness she is pleased to shew me. I will be bold to say she will marry an honest man, though he is but a poor one; and she shall never want anything which I can give her or do for her, while my name is Joseph Atkinson."

"And so her name is a secret, Joe, is it?" cries Booth.

"Why, sir," answered the serjeant, "I hope your honour will not insist upon knowing that, as I think it would be dishonourable in me to mention it."

"Not at all," replied Booth; "I am the farthest in the world from any such desire. I know thee better than to imagine thou wouldst disclose the name of a fair lady." Booth then shook Atkinson heartily by the hand, and assured him earnestly of the joy he had in his good fortune; for which the good serjeant failed not of making all proper acknowledgments. After which they parted, and Booth returned home.

As Mrs. Ellison opened the door, Booth hastily rushed by; for he had the utmost difficulty to prevent laughing in her face. He ran directly up-stairs, and, throwing himself into a chair, discharged such a fit

Digitized by Google

of laughter as greatly surprized, and at first almost frightened, his wife.

Amelia, it will be supposed, presently enquired into the cause of this phenomenon, with which Booth, as soon as he was able (for that was not within a few minutes), acquainted her. The news did not affect her in the same manner it had affected her husband. On the contrary, she cried, "I protest I cannot guess what makes you see it in so ridiculous a light. I really think Mrs. Ellison hath chosen very well. I am convinced Joe will make her one of the best of husbands; and, in my opinion, that is the greatest blessing a woman can be possessed of."

However, when Mrs. Ellison came into her room a little while afterwards to fetch the children, Amelia became of a more risible disposition, especially when the former, turning to Booth, who was then present, said, "So, captain, my jantee-serjeant was very early here this morning. I scolded my maid heartily for letting him wait so long in the entry like a lacquais, when she might have shewn him into my inner apartment." At which words Booth burst out into a very loud laugh; and Amelia herself could no more prevent laughing than she could blushing.

"Heyday!" cries Mrs. Ellison; "what have I said to cause all this mirth?" and at the same time blushed, and looked very silly, as is always the case with persons who suspect themselves to be the objects of laughter, without absolutely taking what it is which makes them ridiculous.

Booth still continued laughing; but Amelia, composing her muscles, said, "I ask your pardon, dear

Digitized by Google

Mrs. Ellison; but Mr. Booth hath been in a strange giggling humour all this morning; and I really think it is infectious."

"I ask your pardon, too, madam," cries Booth, "but one is sometimes unaccountably foolish."

"Nay, but seriously," said she, "what is the matter?—something I said about the serjeant, I believe; but you may laugh as much as you please; I am not ashamed of owning I think him one of the prettiest fellows I ever saw in my life; and, I own, I scolded my maid at suffering him to wait in my entry; and where is the mighty ridiculous matter, pray?"

"None at all," answered Booth; "and I hope the next time he will be ushered into your inner apartment."

"Why should he not, sir?" replied she, "for, wherever he is ushered, I am convinced he will behave himself as a gentleman should."

Here Amelia put an end to the discourse, or it might have proceeded to very great lengths; for Booth was of a waggish inclination, and Mrs. Ellison was not a lady of the nicest delicacy.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE HEROIC BEHAVIOUR OF COLONEL BATH.

BOOTH went this morning to pay a second visit to the colonel, where he found Colonel James. Both the colonel and the lieutenant appeared a little shocked at their first meeting, but matters were soon cleared up; for the former presently advanced to the latter, shook him heartily by the hand, and said, "Mr. Booth, I am ashamed to see you; for I have injured you, and I heartily ask your pardon. I am now perfectly convinced that what I hinted to my brother, and which I find had like to have produced such fatal consequences, was entirely groundless. If you will be contented with my asking your pardon, and spare me the disagreeable remembrance of what led me into my error, I shall esteem it as the highest obligation."

Booth answered, "As to what regards yourself, my dear colonel, I am abundantly satisfied; but, as I am convinced some rascal hath been my enemy with you in the cruellest manner, I hope you will not deny me the opportunity of kicking him through the world."

"By all the dignity of man," cries Colonel Bath, "the boy speaks with spirit, and his request is reasonable."

Digitized by Google

Colonel James hesitated a moment, and then whispered Booth that he would give him all the satisfaction imaginable concerning the whole affair when they were alone together; upon which, Booth addressing himself to Colonel Bath, the discourse turned on other matters during the remainder of the visit, which was but short, and then both went away together, leaving Colonel Bath as well as it was possible to expect, more to the satisfaction of Booth than of Colonel James, who would not have been displeased if his wound had been more dangerous; for he was grown somewhat weary of a disposition that he rather called captious than heroic, and which, as he every day more and more hated his wife, he apprehended might some time or other give him some trouble; for Bath was the most affectionate of brothers, and had often swore, in the presence of James, that he would eat any man alive who should use his sister ill.

Colonel Bath was well satisfied that his brother and the lieutenant were gone out with a design of tilting, from which he offered not a syllable to dissuade them, as he was convinced it was right, and that Booth could not in honour take, nor the colonel give, any less satisfaction. When they had been gone therefore about half an hour, he rang his bell to enquire if there was any news of his brother; a question which he repeated every ten minutes for the space of two hours, when, having heard nothing of him, he began to conclude that both were killed on the spot.

While he was in this state of anxiety his sister came to see him; for, notwithstanding his desire of keep-

Digitized by Google

ing it a secret, the duel had blazed all over the town. After receiving some kind congratulations on his safety, and some unkind hints concerning the warmth of his temper, the colonel asked her when she had seen her husband? she answered not that morning. He then communicated to her his suspicion, told her he was convinced his brother had drawn his sword that day, and that, as neither of them had heard anything from him, he began to apprehend the worst that could happen.

Neither Miss Bellamy nor Mrs. Cibber were ever in a greater consternation on the stage than now appeared in the countenance of Mrs. James. "Good Heavens! brother," cries she; "what do you tell me? you have frightened me to death. Let your man get me a glass of water immediately, if you have not a mind to see me die before your face. When, where, how was this quarrel? why did you not prevent it if you knew of it? is it not enough to be every day tormenting me with hazarding your own life, but must you bring the life of one who you know must be, and ought to be, so much the dearest of all to me, into danger? take your sword, brother, take your sword, and plunge it into my bosom; it would be kinder of you than to fill it with such dreads and terrours." Here she swallowed the glass of water, and then threw herself back in her chair, as if she had intended to faint away.

Perhaps, if she had so, the colonel would have lent her no assistance, for she had hurt him more than by ten thousand stabs. He sat erect in his chair, with his eyebrows knit, his forehead wrinkled, his eyes

Digitized by Google

flashing fire, his teeth grating against each other, and breathing horrour all round him. In this posture he sat for some time silent, casting disdainful looks at his sister. At last his voice found its way through a passion which had almost choaked him, and he cried out, "Sister, what have I done to deserve the opinion you express of me? which of my actions hath made you conclude that I am a rascal and a coward? look at that poor sword, which never woman yet saw but in its sheath; what hath that done to merit your desire that it should be contaminated with the blood of a woman?"

"Alas! brother," cried she, "I know not what you say; you are desirous, I believe, to terrify me out of the little senses I have left. What can I have said, in the agonies of grief into which you threw me, to deserve this passion?"

"What have you said?" answered the colonel: "you have said that which, if a man had spoken, nay, d—n me, if he had but hinted that he durst even think, I would have made him eat my sword; by all the dignity of man, I would have crumbled his soul into powder. But I consider that the words were spoken by a woman, and I am calm again. Consider, my dear, that you are my sister, and behave yourself with more spirit. I have only mentioned to you my surmise. It may not have happened as I suspect; but, let what will have happened, you will have the comfort that your husband hath behaved himself with becoming dignity, and lies in the bed of honour."

"Talk not to me of such comfort," replied the lady; "it is a loss I cannot survive. But why do I sit here

Digitized by Google

lamenting myself? I will go this instant and know the worst of my fate, if my trembling limbs will carry me to my coach. Good morrow, dear brother; whatever becomes of me, I am glad to find you out of danger." The colonel paid her his proper compliments, and she then left the room, but returned instantly back, saying, "Brother, I must beg the favour of you to let your footman step to my mantua-maker; I am sure it is a miracle, in my present distracted condition, how it came into my head." The footman was presently summoned, and Mrs. James delivered him his message, which was to countermand the orders which she had given that very morning to make her up a new suit of brocade. "Heaven knows," says she, "now when I can wear brocade, or whether ever I shall wear it." And now, having repeated her message with great exactness, lest there should be any mistake, she again lamented her wretched situation, and then departed, leaving the colonel in full expectation of hearing speedy news of the fatal issue of the battle.

But, though the reader should entertain the same curiosity, we must be excused from satisfying it till we have first accounted for an incident which we have related in this very chapter, and which, we think, deserves some solution. The critic, I am convinced, already is apprized that I mean the friendly behaviour of James to Booth, which, from what we had before recorded, seemed so little to be expected.

It must be remembered that the anger which the former of these gentlemen had conceived against the latter arose entirely from the false account given by

Digitized by Google

Miss Matthews of Booth, whom that lady had accused to Colonel James of having as basely as wickedly traduced his character.

Now, of all the ministers of vengeance, there are none with whom the devil deals so treacherously as with those whom he employs in executing the mischievous purposes of an angry mistress; for no sooner is revenge executed on an offending lover than it is sure to be repented; and all the anger which before raged against the beloved object, returns with double fury on the head of his assassin.

Miss Matthews, therefore, no sooner heard that Booth was killed (for so was the report at first, and by a colonel of the army) than she immediately concluded it to be James. She was extremely shocked with the news, and her heart instantly began to relent. All the reasons on which she had founded her love recurred, in the strongest and liveliest colours, to her mind, and all the causes of her hatred sunk down and disappeared; or, if the least remembrance of anything which had disobliged her remained, her heart became his zealous advocate, and soon satisfied her that her own fates were more to be blamed than he, and that, without being a villain, he could have acted no otherwise than he had done.

In this temper of mind she looked on herself as the murderer of an innocent man, and, what to her was much worse, of the man she had loved, and still did love, with all the violence imaginable. She looked on James as the tool with which she had done this murder; and, as it is usual for people who have rashly or inadvertently made any animate or inani-

Digitized by Google

mate thing the instrument of mischief to hate the innocent means by which the mischief was effected (for this is a subtle method which the mind invents to excuse ourselves, the last objects on whom we would willingly wreak our vengeance), so Miss Matthews now hated and cursed James as the efficient cause of that act which she herself had contrived and laboured to carry into execution.

She sat down therefore in a furious agitation, little short of madness, and wrote the following letter:

"I hope this will find you in the hands of justice, for the murder of one of the best friends that ever man was blest with. In one sense, indeed, he may seem to have deserved his fate, by chusing a fool for a friend; for who but a fool would have believed what the anger and rage of an injured woman suggested; a story so improbable, that I could scarce be thought in earnest when I mentioned it?

"Know, then, cruel wretch, that poor Booth loved you of all men breathing, and was, I believe, in your commendation guilty of as much falsehood as I was in what I told you concerning him.

"If this knowledge makes you miserable, it is no more than you have made the unhappy

F. MATTHEWS."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER NINE

BEING THE LAST CHAPTER OF THE FIFTH BOOK.

WE shall now return to Colonel James and Mr. Booth, who walked together from Colonel Bath's lodging with much more peaceable intention than that gentleman had conjectured, who dreamt of nothing but swords and guns and implements of wars.

The Birdcage-walk in the Park was the scene appointed by James for unburthening his mind. — Thither they came, and there James acquainted Booth with all that which the reader knows already, and gave him the letter which we have inserted at the end of the last chapter.

Booth exprest great astonishment at this relation, not without venting some detestation of the wickedness of Miss Matthews; upon which James took him up, saying, he ought not to speak with such abhorrence of faults which love for him had occasioned.

"Can you mention love, my dear colonel," cried Booth, "and such a woman in the same breath?"

"Yes, faith! can I," says James; "for the devil take me if I know a more lovely woman in the world." Here he began to describe her whole person; but, as we cannot insert all the description, so we shall omit it all; and concluded with saying,

Digitized by Google

"Curse me if I don't think her the finest creature in the universe. I would give half my estate, Booth, she loved me as well as she doth you. Though, on second consideration, I believe I should repent that bargain; for then, very possibly, I should not care a farthing for her."

"You will pardon me, dear colonel," answered Booth; "but to me there appears somewhat very singular in your way of thinking. Beauty is indeed the object of liking, great qualities of admiration, good ones of esteem; but the devil take me if I think anything but love to be the object of love."

"Is there not something too selfish," replied James, "in that opinion? but, without considering it in that light, is it not of all things the most insipid? all oil! all sugar! zounds! it is enough to cloy the sharp-set appetite of a parson. Acids surely are the most likely to quicken."

"I do not love reasoning in allegories," cries Booth; "but with regard to love, I declare I never found anything cloying in it. I have lived almost alone with my wife near three years together, was never tired with her company, nor ever wished for any other; and I am sure I never tasted any of the acid you mention to quicken my appetite."

"This is all very extraordinary and romantic to me," answered the colonel. "If I was to be shut up three years with the same woman, which Heaven forbid! nothing, I think, could keep me alive but a temper as violent as that of Miss Matthews. As to love, it would make me sick to death in the twen-

Digitized by Google

tieth part of that time. If I was so condemned, let me see, what would I wish the woman to be? I think no one virtue would be sufficient. With the spirit of a tigress I would have her be a prude, a scold, a scholar, a critic, a wit, a politician, and a jacobite; and then, perhaps, eternal opposition would keep up our spirits; and, wishing one another daily at the devil, we should make a shift to drag on a damnable state of life, without much spleen or vapours."

"And so you do not intend," cries Booth, "to break with this woman?"

"Not more than I have already, if I can help it," answered the colonel.

"And you will be reconciled to her?" said Booth.

"Yes, faith! will I, if I can," answered the colonel; "I hope you have no objection."

"None, my dear friend," said Booth, "unless on your account."

"I do believe you," said the colonel: "and yet, let me tell you, you are a very extraordinary man, not to desire me to quit her on your own account. Upon my soul, I begin to pity the woman, who hath placed her affection, perhaps, on the only man in England of your age who would not return it. But for my part, I promise you, I like her beyond all other women; and, whilst that is the case, my boy, if her mind was as full of iniquity as Pandora's box was of diseases, I'd hug her close in my arms, and only take as much care as possible to keep the lid down for fear of mischief. But come, dear Booth,"

Digitized by Google

said he, "let us consider your affairs; for I am ashamed of having neglected them so long; and the only anger I have against this wench is, that she was the occasion of it."

Booth then acquainted the colonel with the promises he had received from the noble lord, upon which James shook him by the hand, and heartily wished him joy, crying, "I do assure you, if you have his interest, you will need no other; I did not know you was acquainted with him."

To which Mr. Booth answered, "That he was but a new acquaintance, and that he was recommended to him by a lady."

"A lady!" cries the colonel; "well, I don't ask her name. You are a happy man, Booth, amongst the women; and, I assure you, you could have no stronger recommendation. The peer loves the ladies, I believe, as well as ever Mark Antony did; and it is not his fault if he hath not spent as much upon them. If he once fixes his eye upon a woman, he will stick at nothing to get her."

"Ay, indeed!" cries Booth. "Is that his character?"

"Ay, faith," answered the colonel, "and the character of most men besides him. Few of them, I mean, will stick at anything beside their money. Jusque à la Bourse is sometimes the boundary of love as well as friendship. And, indeed, I never knew any other man part with his money so very freely on these occasions. You see, dear Booth, the confidence I have in your honour."

"I hope, indeed, you have," cries Booth, "but I

Digitized by Google

don't see what instance you now give me of that confidence."

"Have not I shewn you," answered James, "where you may carry your goods to market? I can assure you, my friend, that is a secret I would not impart to every man in your situation, and all circumstances considered."

"I am very sorry, sir," cries Booth very gravely, and turning as pale as death, "you should entertain a thought of this kind; a thought which hath almost frozen up my blood. I am unwilling to believe there are such villains in the world; but there is none of them whom I should detest half so much as myself, if my own mind had ever suggested to me a hint of that kind. I have tasted of some distresses of life, and I know not to what greater I may be driven, but my honour, I thank Heaven, is in my own power, and I can boldly say to Fortune she shall not rob me of it."

"Have I not exprest that confidence, my dear Booth?" answered the colonel. "And what you say now well justifies my opinion; for I do agree with you that, considering all things, it would be the highest instance of dishonour."

"Dishonour, indeed!" returned Booth. "What! to prostitute my wife! Can I think there is such a wretch breathing?"

"I don't know that," said the colonel; "but I am sure it was very far from my intention to insinuate the least hint of any such matter to you. Nor can I imagine how you yourself could conceive such a thought. The goods I meant were no other than

Digitized by Google

the charming person of Miss Matthews; for whom I am convinced my lord would bid a swinging price against me."

Booth's countenance greatly cleared up at this declaration, and he answered with a smile, that he hoped he need not give the colonel any assurances on that head. However, though he was satisfied with regard to the colonel's suspicions, yet some chimeras now arose in his brain which gave him no very agreeable sensations. What these were, the sagacious reader may probably suspect; but, if he should not, we may perhaps have occasion to open them in the sequel. Here we will put an end to this dialogue, and to the fifth book of this history.

Digitized by Google

BOOK VI

CHAPTER ONE

PANEGYRICS ON BEAUTY, WITH OTHER GRAVE MATTERS.

THE colonel and Booth walked together to the latter's lodging; for as it was not that day in the week in which all parts of the town are indifferent, Booth could not wait on the colonel.

When they arrived in Spring-garden, Booth, to his great surprize, found no one at home but the maid. In truth, Amelia had accompanied Mrs. Ellison and her children to his lordship's; for, as her little girl showed a great unwillingness to go without her, the fond mother was easily persuaded to make one of the company.

Booth had scarce ushered the colonel up to his apartment when a servant from Mrs. James knocked hastily at the door. The lady, not meeting with her husband at her return home, began to despair of him, and performed everything which was decent on the occasion. An apothecary was presently called with hartshorn and sal volatile, a doctor was sent for, and messengers were despatched every way; amongst the rest, one was sent to enquire at the lodgings of his supposed antagonist.

Digitized by Google

The servant hearing that his master was alive and well above stairs, ran up eagerly to acquaint him with the dreadful situation in which he left his miserable lady at home, and likewise with the occasion of all her distress, saying, that his lady had been at her brother's, and had there heard that his honour was killed in a duel by Captain Booth.

The colonel smiled at this account, and bid the servant make haste back to contradict it. And then turning to Booth, he said, "Was there ever such another fellow as this brother of mine? I thought indeed his behaviour was somewhat odd at the time. I suppose he overheard me whisper that I would give you satisfaction, and thence concluded we went together with a design of tilting. D—n the fellow, I begin to grow heartily sick of him, and wish I could get well rid of him without cutting his throat, which I sometimes apprehend he will insist on my doing, as a return for my getting him made a lieutenant-colonel."

Whilst these two gentlemen were commenting on the character of the third, Amelia and her company returned, and all presently came up-stairs, not only the children, but the two ladies, laden with trinkets as if they had been come from a fair. Amelia, who had been highly delighted all the morning with the excessive pleasure which her children enjoyed, when she saw Colonel James with her husband, and perceived the most manifest marks of that reconciliation which she knew had been so long and so earnestly wished by Booth, became so transported with joy, that her happiness was scarce capable of addition.

Digitized by Google

Exercise had painted her face with vermilion; and the highest good-humour had so sweetened every feature, and a vast flow of spirits had so lightened up her bright eyes, that she was all a blaze of beauty. She seemed, indeed, as Milton sublimely describes Eve,

> — Adorn'd
> With what all Earth or Heaven could bestow
> To make her amiable.

Again: —

> Grace was in all her steps, Heaven in her eye,
> In every gesture, dignity and love.

Or, as Waller sweetly, though less sublimely sings: —

> Sweetness, truth, and every grace
> Which time and use are wont to teach,
> The eye may in a moment reach,
> And read distinctly in her face.

Or, to mention one poet more, and him of all the sweetest, she seemed to be the very person of whom Suckling wrote the following lines, where, speaking of Cupid, he says,

> All his lovely looks, his pleasing fires,
> All his sweet motions, all his taking smiles;
> All that awakes, all that inflames desires,
> All that sweetly commands, all that beguiles,
> He does into one pair of eyes convey,
> And there begs leave that he himself may stay.

Such was Amelia at this time when she entered the room; and, having paid her respects to the colonel, she went up to her husband, and cried, "O, my dear! never were any creatures so happy as your little

Digitized by Google

things have been this whole morning; and all owing to my lord's goodness; sure never was anything so good-natured and so generous!" She then made the children produce their presents, the value of which amounted to a pretty large sum; for there was a gold watch, amongst the trinkets, that cost above twenty guineas.

Instead of discovering so much satisfaction on this occasion as Amelia expected, Booth very gravely answered, "And pray, my dear, how are we to repay all these obligations to his lordship?" "How can you ask so strange a question?" cries Mrs. Ellison: "how little do you know of the soul of generosity (for sure my cousin deserves that name) when you call a few little trinkets given to children an obligation!" "Indeed, my dear," cries Amelia, "I would have stopped his hand if it had been possible; nay, I was forced at last absolutely to refuse, or I believe he would have laid a hundred pound out on the children; for I never saw any one so fond of children, which convinces me he is one of the best of men; but I ask your pardon, colonel," said she, turning to him; "I should not entertain you with these subjects; yet I know you have goodness enough to excuse the folly of a mother."

The colonel made a very low assenting bow, and soon after they all sat down to a small repast; for the colonel had promised Booth to dine with him when they first came home together, and what he had since heard from his own house gave him still less inclination than ever to repair thither.

But, besides both these, there was a third and

Digitized by Google

stronger inducement to him to pass the day with his friend, and this was the desire of passing it with his friend's wife. When the colonel had first seen Amelia in France, she was but just recovered from a consumptive habit, and looked pale and thin; besides, his engagements with Miss Bath at that time took total possession of him, and guarded his heart from the impressions of another woman; and, when he had dined with her in town, the vexations through which she had lately passed had somewhat deadened her beauty; besides, he was then engaged, as we have seen, in a very warm pursuit of a new mistress, but now he had no such impediment; for, though the reader hath just before seen his warm declarations of a passion for Miss Matthews, yet it may be remembered that he had been in possession of her for above a fortnight; and one of the happy properties of this kind of passion is, that it can with equal violence love half a dozen or half a score different objects at one and the same time.

But indeed such were the charms now displayed by Amelia, of which we endeavoured above to draw some faint resemblance, that perhaps no other beauty could have secured him from their influence; and here, to confess a truth in his favour, however the grave or rather the hypocritical part of mankind may censure it, I am firmly persuaded that to withdraw admiration from exquisite beauty, or to feel no delight in gazing at it, is as impossible as to feel no warmth from the most scorching rays of the sun. To run away is all that is in our power; and in the former case, if it must be allowed we have the power

Digitized by Google

of running away, it must be allowed also that it requires the strongest resolution to execute it; for when, as Dryden says,

All paradise is open'd in a face,

how natural is the desire of going thither! and how difficult to quit the lovely prospect!

And yet, however difficult this may be, my young readers, it is absolutely necessary, and that immediately too: flatter not yourselves that fire will not scorch as well as warm, and the longer we stay within its reach the more we shall burn. The admiration of a beautiful woman, though the wife of our dearest friend, may at first perhaps be innocent, but let us not flatter ourselves it will always remain so; desire is sure to succeed; and wishes, hopes, designs, with a long train of mischiefs, tread close at our heels. In affairs of this kind we may most properly apply the well-known remark of *nemo repente fuit turpissimus*. It fares, indeed, with us on this occasion as with the unwary traveller in some parts of Arabia the desart, whom the treacherous sands imperceptibly betray till he is overwhelmed and lost. In both cases the only safety is by withdrawing our feet the very first moment we perceive them sliding.

This digression may appear impertinent to some readers; we could not, however, avoid the opportunity of offering the above hints; since of all passions there is none against which we should so strongly fortify ourselves as this, which is generally called love; for no other lays before us, especially in the tumultuous days of youth, such sweet, such strong

Digitized by Google

and almost irresistible temptations; none hath produced in private life such fatal and lamentable tragedies; and what is worst of all, there is none to whose poison and infatuation the best of minds are so liable. Ambition scarce ever produces any evil but when it reigns in cruel and savage bosoms; and avarice seldom flourishes at all but in the basest and poorest soil. Love, on the contrary, sprouts usually up in the richest and noblest minds; but there, unless nicely watched, pruned, and cultivated, and carefully kept clear of those vicious weeds which are too apt to surround it, it branches forth into wildness and disorder, produces nothing desirable, but choaks up and kills whatever is good and noble in the mind where it so abounds. In short, to drop the allegory, not only tenderness and good nature, but bravery, generosity, and every virtue are often made the instruments of effecting the most atrocious purposes of this all-subduing tyrant.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER TWO

WHICH WILL NOT APPEAR, WE PRESUME, UNNATURAL TO ALL MARRIED READERS.

IF the table of poor Booth afforded but an indifferent repast to the colonel's hunger, here was most excellent entertainment of a much higher kind. The colonel began now to wonder within himself at his not having before discovered such incomparable beauty and excellence. This wonder was indeed so natural that, lest it should arise likewise in the reader, we thought proper to give the solution of it in the preceding chapter.

During the first two hours the colonel scarce ever had his eyes off from Amelia; for he was taken by surprize, and his heart was gone before he suspected himself to be in any danger. His mind, however, no sooner suggested a certain secret to him than it suggested some degree of prudence to him at the same time; and the knowledge that he had thoughts to conceal, and the care of concealing them, had birth at one and the same instant. During the residue of the day, therefore, he grew more circumspect, and contented himself with now and then stealing a look by chance, especially as the more than ordinary gravity of Booth made him fear that his former behaviour had betrayed to Booth's observation the

Digitized by Google

great and sudden liking he had conceived for his wife, even before he had observed it in himself.

Amelia continued the whole day in the highest spirits and highest good humour imaginable, never once remarking that appearance of discontent in her husband of which the colonel had taken notice; so much more quick-sighted, as we have somewhere else hinted, is guilt than innocence. Whether Booth had in reality made any such observations on the colonel's behaviour as he had suspected, we will not undertake to determine; yet so far may be material to say, as we can with sufficient certainty, that the change in Booth's behaviour that day, from what was usual with him, was remarkable enough. None of his former vivacity appeared in his conversation; and his countenance was altered from being the picture of sweetness and good humour, not indeed to sourness or moroseness, but to gravity and melancholy.

Though the colonel's suspicion had the effect which we have mentioned on his behaviour, yet it could not persuade him to depart. In short, he sat in his chair as if confined to it by enchantment, stealing looks now and then, and humouring his growing passion, without having command enough over his limbs to carry him out of the room, till decency at last forced him to put an end to his preposterous visit. When the husband and wife were left alone together, the latter resumed the subject of her children, and gave Booth a particular narrative of all that had passed at his lordship's, which he, though something had certainly disconcerted him, affected to receive with

Digitized by Google

all the pleasure he could; and this affectation, however aukwardly he acted his part, passed very well on Amelia; for she could not well conceive a displeasure of which she had not the least hint of any cause, and indeed at a time when, from his reconciliation with James, she imagined her husband to be entirely and perfectly happy.

The greatest part of that night Booth past awake; and, if during the residue he might be said to sleep, he could scarce be said to enjoy repose; his eyes were no sooner closed, than he was pursued and haunted by the most frightful and terrifying dreams, which threw him into so restless a condition, that he soon disturbed his Amelia, and greatly alarmed her with apprehensions that he had been seized by some dreadful disease, though he had not the least symptoms of a fever by any extraordinary heat, or any other indication, but was rather colder than usual.

As Booth assured his wife that he was very well, but found no inclination to sleep, she likewise bid adieu to her slumbers, and attempted to entertain him with her conversation. Upon which his lordship occurred as the first topic; and she repeated to him all the stories which she had heard from Mrs. Ellison, of the peer's goodness to his sister and his nephew and niece. "It is impossible, my dear," says she, "to describe their fondness for their uncle, which is to me an incontestible sign of a parent's goodness." In this manner she ran on for several minutes, concluding at last, that it was pity so very few had such generous minds joined to immense fortunes.

Digitized by Google

Booth, instead of making a direct answer to what Amelia had said, cried coldly, "But do you think, my dear, it was right to accept all those expensive toys which the children brought home? And I ask you again, what return we are to make for these obligations?"

"Indeed, my dear," cried Amelia, "you see this matter in too serious a light. Though I am the last person in the world who would lessen his lordship's goodness (indeed I shall always think we are both infinitely obliged to him), yet sure you must allow the expense to be a mere trifle to such a vast fortune. As for return, his own benevolence, in the satisfaction it receives, more than repays itself, and I am convinced he expects no other."

"Very well, my dear," cries Booth, "you shall have it your way; I must confess I never yet found any reason to blame your discernment; and perhaps I have been in the wrong to give myself so much uneasiness on this account."

"Uneasiness, child!" said Amelia eagerly; "Good Heavens! hath this made you uneasy?"

"I do own it hath," answered Booth, "and it hath been the only cause of breaking my repose."

"Why then I wish," cries Amelia, "all the things had been at the devil before ever the children had seen them; and, whatever I may think myself, I promise you they shall never more accept the value of a farthing:—if upon this occasion I have been the cause of your uneasiness, you will do me the justice to believe that I was totally innocent."

At those words Booth caught her in his arms, and

Digitized by Google

with the tenderest embrace, emphatically repeating the word innocent, cried, "Heaven forbid I should think otherwise! Oh, thou art the best of creatures that ever blessed a man!"

"Well, but," said she, smiling, "do confess, my dear, the truth; I promise you I won't blame you nor disesteem you for it; but is not pride really at the bottom of this fear of an obligation?"

"Perhaps it may," answered he; "or, if you will, you may call it fear. I own I am afraid of obligations, as the worst kind of debts; for I have generally observed those who confer them expect to be repaid ten thousand-fold."

Here ended all that is material of their discourse; and a little time afterwards, they both fell fast asleep in one another's arms; from which time Booth had no more restlessness, nor any further perturbation in his dreams.

Their repose, however, had been so much disturbed in the former part of the night, that, as it was very late before they enjoyed that sweet sleep I have just mentioned, they lay abed the next day till noon, when they both rose with the utmost chearfulness; and, while Amelia bestirred herself in the affairs of her family, Booth went to visit the wounded colonel.

He found that gentleman still proceeding very fast in his recovery, with which he was more pleased than he had reason to be with his reception; for the colonel received him very coldly indeed, and, when Booth told him he had received perfect satisfaction from his brother, Bath erected his head and answered with a sneer, "Very well, sir, if you think

Digitized by Google

these matters can be so made up, d—n me if it is any business of mine. My dignity hath not been injured."

"No one, I believe," cries Booth, "dare injure it."

"You believe so!" said the colonel: "I think, sir, you might be assured of it; but this, at least, you may be assured of, that if any man did, I would tumble him down the precipice of hell, d—n me, that you may be assured of."

As Booth found the colonel in this disposition, he had no great inclination to lengthen out his visit, nor did the colonel himself seem to desire it: so he soon returned back to his Amelia, whom he found performing the office of a cook, with as much pleasure as a fine lady generally enjoys in dressing herself out for a ball.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER THREE

IN WHICH THE HISTORY LOOKS A LITTLE BACKWARDS.

BEFORE we proceed farther in our history we shall recount a short scene to our reader which passed between Amelia and Mrs. Ellison whilst Booth was on his visit to Colonel Bath. We have already observed that Amelia had conceived an extraordinary affection for Mrs. Bennet, which had still encreased every time she saw her; she thought she discovered something wonderfully good and gentle in her countenance and disposition, and was very desirous of knowing her whole history.

She had a very short interview with that lady this morning in Mrs. Ellison's apartment. As soon, therefore, as Mrs. Bennet was gone, Amelia acquainted Mrs. Ellison with the good opinion she had conceived of her friend, and likewise with her curiosity to know her story: "For there must be something uncommonly good," said she, "in one who can so truly mourn for a husband above three years after his death."

"O!" cries Mrs. Ellison, "to be sure the world must allow her to have been one of the best of wives. And, indeed, upon the whole, she is a good sort of woman; and what I like her the best for is a strong resemblance that she bears to yourself in

Digitized by Google

the form of her person, and still more in her voice. But for my own part, I know nothing remarkable in her fortune, unless what I have told you, that she was the daughter of a clergyman, had little or no fortune, and married a poor parson for love, who left her in the utmost distress. If you please, I will shew you a letter which she writ to me at that time, though I insist upon your promise never to mention it to her; indeed, you will be the first person I ever shewed it to." She then opened her scrutore, and, taking out the letter, delivered it to Amelia, saying, "There, madam, is, I believe, as fine a picture of distress as can well be drawn."

"DEAR MADAM, — As I have no other friend on earth but yourself, I hope you will pardon my writing to you at this season; though I do not know that you can relieve my distresses, or, if you can, have I any pretence to expect that you should. My poor dear, O Heavens — my —— lies dead in the house; and, after I had procured sufficient to bury him, a set of ruffians have entered my house, seized all I have, have seized his dear, dear corpse, and threaten to deny it burial. For Heaven's sake, send me, at least, some advice; little Tommy stands now by me crying for bread, which I have not to give him. I can say no more than that I am

Your most distressed humble servant,

M. BENNET."

Amelia read the letter over twice, and then returning it with tears in her eyes, asked how the poor creature could possibly get through such distress.

"You may depend upon it, madam," said Mrs.

Digitized by Google

Ellison, "the moment I read this account I posted away immediately to the lady. As to the seizing the body, that I found was a mere bugbear; but all the rest was literally true. I sent immediately for the same gentleman that I recommended to Mr. Booth, left the care of burying the corpse to him, and brought my friend and her little boy immediately away to my own house, where she remained some months in the most miserable condition. I then prevailed with her to retire into the country, and procured her a lodging with a friend at St. Edmundsbury, the air and gaiety of which place by degrees recovered her; and she returned in about a twelve-month to town, as well, I think, as she is at present."

"I am almost afraid to ask," cries Amelia, "and yet I long methinks to know what is become of the poor little boy."

"He hath been dead," said Mrs. Ellison, "a little more than half a year; and the mother lamented him at first almost as much as she did her husband, but I found it indeed rather an easier matter to comfort her, though I sat up with her near a fortnight upon the latter occasion."

"You are a good creature," said Amelia, "and I love you dearly."

"Alas! madam," cries she, "what could I have done if it had not been for the goodness of that best of men, my noble cousin! His lordship no sooner heard of the widow's distress from me than he immediately settled one hundred and fifty pounds a year upon her during her life."

Digitized by Google

"Well! how noble, how generous was that!" said Amelia. "I declare I begin to love your cousin, Mrs. Ellison."

"And I declare if you do," answered she, "there is no love lost, I verily believe; if you had heard what I heard him say yesterday behind your back ——"

"Why, what did he say, Mrs. Ellison?" cries Amelia.

"He said," answered the other, "that you was the finest woman his eyes ever beheld. — Ah! it is in vain to wish, and yet I cannot help wishing too. — O, Mrs. Booth! if you had been a single woman, I firmly believe I could have made you the happiest in the world. And I sincerely think I never saw a woman who deserved it more."

"I am obliged to you, madam," cries Amelia, "for your good opinion; but I really look on myself already as the happiest woman in the world. Our circumstances, it is true, might have been a little more fortunate; but O, my dear Mrs. Ellison! what fortune can be put in the balance with such a husband as mine?"

"I am afraid, dear madam," answered Mrs. Ellison, "you would not hold the scale fairly. — I acknowledge, indeed, Mr. Booth is a very pretty gentleman; Heaven forbid I should endeavour to lessen him in your opinion; yet, if I was to be brought to confession, I could not help saying I see where the superiority lies, and that the men have more reason to envy Mr. Booth than the women have to envy his lady."

Digitized by Google

"Nay, I will not bear this," replied Amelia. "You will forfeit all my love if you have the least disrespectful opinion of my husband. You do not know him, Mrs. Ellison; he is the best, the kindest, the worthiest of all his sex. I have observed, indeed, once or twice before, that you have taken some dislike to him. I cannot conceive for what reason. If he hath said or done anything to disoblige you, I am sure I can justly acquit him of design. His extreme vivacity makes him sometimes a little too heedless; but, I am convinced, a more innocent heart, or one more void of offence, was never in a human bosom."

"Nay, if you grow serious," cries Mrs. Ellison, "I have done. How is it possible you should suspect I had taken any dislike to a man to whom I have always shewn so perfect a regard; but to say I think him, or almost any other man in the world, worthy of yourself, is not within my power with truth. And since you force the confession from me, I declare, I think such beauty, such sense, and such goodness united, might aspire without vanity to the arms of any monarch in Europe."

"Alas! my dear Mrs. Ellison," answered Amelia, "do you think happiness and a crown so closely united? how many miserable women have lain in the arms of kings? — Indeed, Mrs. Ellison, if I had all the merit you compliment me with, I should think it all fully rewarded with such a man as, I thank Heaven, hath fallen to my lot; nor would I, upon my soul, exchange that lot with any queen in the universe."

Digitized by Google

"Well, there are enow of our sex," said Mrs. Ellison, "to keep you in countenance; but I shall never forget the beginning of a song of Mr. Congreve's, that my husband was so fond of that he was always singing it: —

> Love 's but a frailty of the mind,
> When 'tis not with ambition join'd.

Love without interest makes but an unsavoury dish, in my opinion."

"And pray how long hath this been your opinion?" said Amelia, smiling.

"Ever since I was born," answered Mrs. Ellison; "at least, ever since I can remember."

"And have you never," said Amelia, "deviated from this generous way of thinking?"

"Never once," answered the other, "in the whole course of my life."

"O, Mrs. Ellison! Mrs. Ellison!" cries Amelia; "why do we ever blame those who are disingenuous in confessing their faults, when we are so often ashamed to own ourselves in the right? Some women now, in my situation, would be angry that you had not made confidantes of them; but I never desire to know more of the secrets of others than they are pleased to intrust me with. You must believe, however, that I should not have given you these hints of my knowing all if I had disapproved your choice. On the contrary, I assure you I highly approve it. The gentility he wants, it will be easily in your power to procure for him; and as for his good qualities, I will myself be bound for them; and I make not the

Digitized by Google

least doubt, as you have owned to me yourself that you have placed your affections on him, you will be one of the happiest women in the world."

"Upon my honour," cries Mrs. Ellison very gravely, "I do not understand one word of what you mean."

"Upon my honour, you astonish me," said Amelia; "but I have done."

"Nay then," said the other, "I insist upon knowing what you mean."

"Why, what can I mean," answered Amelia, "but your marriage with serjeant Atkinson?"

"With serjeant Atkinson!" cries Mrs. Ellison eagerly, "my marriage with a serjeant!"

"Well, with Mr. Atkinson, then, Captain Atkinson, if you please; for so I hope to see him."

"And have you really no better opinion of me," said Mrs. Ellison, "than to imagine me capable of such condescension? What have I done, dear Mrs. Booth, to deserve so low a place in your esteem? I find indeed, as Solomon says, *Women ought to watch the door of their lips.* How little did I imagine that a little harmless freedom in discourse could persuade any one that I could entertain a serious intention of disgracing my family! for of a very good family am I come, I assure you, madam, though I now let lodgings. Few of my lodgers, I believe, ever came of a better."

"If I have offended you, madam," said Amelia, "I am very sorry, and ask your pardon; but, besides what I heard from yourself, Mr. Booth told me —"

"O yes!" answered Mrs. Ellison, "Mr. Booth, I

Digitized by Google

know, is a very good friend of mine. Indeed, I know you better than to think it could be your own suspicion. I am very much obliged to Mr. Booth truly."

"Nay," cries Amelia, "the serjeant himself is in fault; for Mr. Booth, I am positive, only repeated what he had from him."

"Impudent coxcomb!" cries Mrs. Ellison. "I shall know how to keep such fellows at a proper distance for the future — I will tell you, dear madam, all that happened. When I rose in the morning I found the fellow waiting in the entry; and, as you had exprest some regard for him as your foster-brother — nay, he is a very genteel fellow, that I must own — I scolded my maid for not shewing him into my little back-room; and I then asked him to walk into the parlour. Could I have imagined he would have construed such little civility into an encouragement?"

"Nay, I will have justice done to my poor brother too," said Amelia. "I myself have seen you give him much greater encouragement than that."

"Well, perhaps I have," said Mrs. Ellison. "I have been always too unguarded in my speech, and can't answer for all I have said." She then began to change her note, and, with an affected laugh, turned all into ridicule; and soon afterwards the two ladies separated, both in apparent good humour; and Amelia went about those domestic offices in which Mr. Booth found her engaged at the end of the preceding chapter.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER FOUR

CONTAINING A VERY EXTRAORDINARY INCIDENT.

IN the afternoon Mr. Booth, with Amelia and her children, went to refresh themselves in the Park. The conversation now turned on what past in the morning with Mrs. Ellison, the latter part of the dialogue, I mean, recorded in the last chapter. Amelia told her husband that Mrs. Ellison so strongly denied all intentions to marry the serjeant, that she had convinced her the poor fellow was under an error, and had mistaken a little too much levity for serious encouragement; and concluded by desiring Booth not to jest with her any more on that subject.

Booth burst into a laugh at what his wife said. "My dear creature," said he, "how easily is thy honesty and simplicity to be imposed on! how little dost thou guess at the art and falsehood of women! I knew a young lady who, against her father's consent, was married to a brother officer of mine; and, as I often used to walk with her (for I knew her father intimately well), she would of her own accord take frequent occasions to ridicule and vilify her husband (for so he was at the time), and exprest great wonder and indignation at the report which she allowed to prevail that she should condescend ever to

Digitized by Google

look at such a fellow with any other design than of laughing at and despising him. The marriage afterwards became publicly owned, and the lady was reputably brought to bed. Since which I have often seen her; nor hath she ever appeared to be in the least ashamed of what she had formerly said, though, indeed, I believe she hates me heartily for having heard it."

"But for what reason," cries Amelia, "should she deny a fact, when she must be so certain of our discovering it, and that immediately?"

"I can't answer what end she may propose," said Booth. "Sometimes one would be almost persuaded that there was a pleasure in lying itself. But this I am certain, that I would believe the honest serjeant on his bare word sooner than I would fifty Mrs. Ellisons on oath. I am convinced he would not have said what he did to me without the strongest encouragement; and, I think, after what we have been both witnesses to, it requires no great confidence in his veracity to give him an unlimited credit with regard to the lady's behaviour."

To this Amelia made no reply; and they discoursed of other matters during the remainder of a very pleasant walk.

When they returned home Amelia was surprized to find an appearance of disorder in her apartment. Several of the trinkets which his lordship had given the children lay about the room; and a suit of her own cloaths, which she had left in her drawers, was now displayed upon the bed.

She immediately summoned her little girl up-stairs,

Digitized by Google

who, as she plainly perceived the moment she came up with a candle, had half cried her eyes out; for, though the girl had opened the door to them, as it was almost dark, she had not taken any notice of this phenomenon in her countenance.

The girl now fell down upon her knees and cried, "For Heaven's sake, madam, do not be angry with me. Indeed, I was left alone in the house; and, hearing somebody knock at the door, I opened it — I am sure thinking no harm. I did not know but it might have been you, or my master, or Madam Ellison; and immediately as I did, the rogue burst in and ran directly up-stairs, and what he hath robbed you of I cannot tell; but I am sure I could not help it, for he was a great swinging man with a pistol in each hand; and, if I had dared to call out, to be sure he would have killed me. I am sure I was never in such a fright in my born days, whereof I am hardly come to myself yet. I believe he is somewhere about the house yet, for I never saw him go out."

Amelia discovered some little alarm at this narrative, but much less than many other ladies would have shewn, for a fright is, I believe, sometimes laid hold of as an opportunity of disclosing several charms peculiar to that occasion. And which, as Mr. Addison says of certain virtues,

> Shun the day, and lie conceal'd
> In the smooth seasons and the calms of life.

Booth, having opened the window, and summoned in two chairmen to his assistance, proceeded to search the house; but all to no purpose; the thief was

Digitized by Google

flown, though the poor girl, in her state of terror, had not seen him escape.

But now a circumstance appeared which greatly surprized both Booth and Amelia; indeed, I believe it will have the same effect on the reader; and this was, that the thief had taken nothing with him. He had, indeed, tumbled over all Booth's and Amelia's cloaths and the children's toys, but had left all behind him.

Amelia was scarce more pleased than astonished at this discovery, and re-examined the girl, assuring her of an absolute pardon if she confessed the truth, but grievously threatening her if she was found guilty of the least falsehood. "As for a thief, child," says she, "that is certainly not true; you have had somebody with you to whom you have been shewing the things; therefore tell me plainly who it was."

The girl protested in the solemnest manner that she knew not the person; but as to some circumstances she began to vary a little from her first account, particularly as to the pistols, concerning which, being strictly examined by Booth, she at last cried —"To be sure, sir, he must have had pistols about him." And instead of persisting in his having rushed in upon her, she now confessed that he had asked at the door for her master and mistress; and that at his desire she had shewn him up-stairs, where he at first said he would stay till their return home; "but, indeed," cried she, "I thought no harm, for he looked like a gentleman-like sort of man. And, indeed, so I thought he was for a good while, whereof he sat down and behaved himself very civilly, till he saw some of

Digitized by Google

master's and miss's things upon the chest of drawers; whereof he cried, 'Hey-day! what's here?' and then he fell to tumbling about the things like any mad. Then I thinks, thinks I to myself, to be sure he is a highwayman, whereof I did not dare speak to him; for I knew Madam Ellison and her maid was gone out, and what could such a poor girl as I do against a great strong man? and besides, thinks I, to be sure he hath got pistols about him, though I can't indeed, (that I will not do for the world) take my Bible-oath that I saw any; yet to be sure he would have soon pulled them out and shot me dead if I had ventured to have said anything to offend him."

"I know not what to make of this," cries Booth. "The poor girl, I verily believe, speaks to the best of her knowledge. A thief it could not be, for he hath not taken the least thing; and it is plain he had the girl's watch in his hand. If it had been a bailiff, surely he would have staid till our return. I can conceive no other from the girl's account than that it must have been some madman."

"O good sir!" said the girl, "now you mention it, if he was not a thief, to be sure he must have been a madman: for indeed he looked, and behaved himself too, very much like a madman; for, now I remember it, he talked to himself and said many strange kind of words that I did not understand. Indeed, he looked altogether as I have seen people in Bedlam; besides, if he was not a madman, what good could it do him to throw the things all about the room in such a manner? and he said something too

Digitized by Google

about my master just before he went down-stairs. I was in such a fright I cannot remember particularly, but I am sure they were very ill words; he said he would do for him — I am sure he said that, and other wicked bad words too, if I could but think of them."

"Upon my word," said Booth, "this is the most probable conjecture; but still I am puzzled to conceive who it should be, for I have no madman to my knowledge of my acquaintance, and it seems, as the girl says, he asked for me." He then turned to the child, and asked her if she was certain of that circumstance.

The poor maid, after a little hesitation, answered, "Indeed, sir, I cannot be very positive; for the fright he threw me into afterwards drove everything almost out of my mind."

"Well, whatever he was," cries Amelia, "I am glad the consequence is no worse; but let this be a warning to you, little Betty, and teach you to take more care for the future. If ever you should be left alone in the house again, be sure to let no persons in without first looking out at the window and seeing who they are. I promised not to chide you any more on this occasion, and I will keep my word; but it is very plain you desired this person to walk up into our apartment, which was very wrong in our absence."

Betty was going to answer, but Amelia would not let her, saying, "Don't attempt to excuse yourself; for I mortally hate a liar, and can forgive any fault sooner than falsehood."

The poor girl then submitted; and now Amelia,

Digitized by Google

with her assistance, began to replace all things in their order; and little Emily hugging her watch with great fondness, declared she would never part with it any more.

Thus ended this odd adventure, not entirely to the satisfaction of Booth; for, besides his curiosity, which, when thoroughly roused, is a very troublesome passion, he had, as is I believe usual with all persons in his circumstances, several doubts and apprehensions of he knew not what. Indeed, fear is never more uneasy than when it doth not certainly know its object; for on such occasions the mind is ever employed in raising a thousand bugbears and fantoms, much more dreadful than any realities, and, like children when they tell tales of hobgoblins, seems industrious in terrifying itself.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER FIVE

CONTAINING SOME MATTERS NOT VERY UNNATURAL.

MATTERS were scarce sooner reduced into order and decency than a violent knocking was heard at the door, such indeed as would have persuaded any one not accustomed to the sound that the madman was returned in the highest springtide of his fury.

Instead, however, of so disagreeable an appearance, a very fine lady presently came into the room, no other, indeed, than Mrs. James herself; for she was resolved to shew Amelia, by the speedy return of her visit, how unjust all her accusation had been of any failure in the duties of friendship; she had, moreover, another reason to accelerate this visit, and that was, to congratulate her friend on the event of the duel between Colonel Bath and Mr. Booth.

The lady had so well profited by Mrs. Booth's remonstrance, that she had now no more of that stiffness and formality which she had worn on a former occasion. On the contrary, she now behaved with the utmost freedom and good-humour, and made herself so very agreeable, that Amelia was highly pleased and delighted with her company.

An incident happened during this visit, that may appear to some too inconsiderable in itself to be

Digitized by Google

recorded; and yet, as it certainly produced a very strong consequence in the mind of Mr. Booth, we cannot prevail on ourselves to pass it by.

Little Emily, who was present in the room while Mrs. James was there, as she stood near that lady happened to be playing with her watch, which she was so greatly overjoyed had escaped safe from the madman. Mrs. James, who exprest great fondness for the child, desired to see the watch, which she commended as the prettiest of the kind she had ever seen.

Amelia caught eager hold of this opportunity to spread the praises of her benefactor. She presently acquainted Mrs. James with the donor's name, and ran on with great encomiums on his lordship's goodness, and particularly on his generosity. To which Mrs. James answered, "O! certainly, madam, his lordship hath universally the character of being extremely generous — where he likes."

In uttering these words she laid a very strong emphasis on the three last monosyllables, accompanying them at the same time with a very sagacious look, a very significant leer, and a great flirt with her fan.

The greatest genius the world hath ever produced observes, in one of his most excellent plays, that

> Trifles, light as air,
> Are to the jealous confirmations strong
> As proofs of holy writ.

That Mr. Booth began to be possessed by this worst of fiends, admits, I think, no longer doubt; for at this speech of Mrs. James he immediately turned pale, and, from a high degree of chearfulness, was all

Digitized by Google

on a sudden struck dumb, so that he spoke not another word till Mrs. James left the room.

The moment that lady drove from the door Mrs. Ellison came up-stairs. She entered the room with a laugh, and very plentifully rallied both Booth and Amelia concerning the madman, of which she had received a full account below-stairs; and at last asked Amelia if she could not guess who it was; but, without receiving an answer, went on, saying, "For my own part, I fancy it must be some lover of yours! some person that hath seen you, and so is run mad with love. Indeed, I should not wonder if all mankind were to do the same. La! Mr. Booth, what makes you grave? why, you are as melancholy as if you had been robbed in earnest. Upon my word, though, to be serious, it is a strange story, and, as the girl tells it, I know not what to make of it. Perhaps it might be some rogue that intended to rob the house, and his heart failed him; yet even that would be very extraordinary. What, did you lose nothing, madam?"

"Nothing at all," answered Amelia. "He did not even take the child's watch."

"Well, captain," cries Mrs. Ellison, "I hope you will take more care of the house to-morrow; for your lady and I shall leave you alone to the care of it. Here, madam," said she, "here is a present from my lord to us; here are two tickets for the masquerade at Ranelagh. You will be so charmed with it! It is the sweetest of all diversions."

"May I be damned, madam," cries Booth, "if my wife shall go thither."

Digitized by Google

Mrs. Ellison stared at these words, and, indeed, so did Amelia; for they were spoke with great vehemence. At length the former cried out with an air of astonishment, "Not let your lady go to Ranelagh, sir?"

"No, madam," cries Booth, "I will not let my wife go to Ranelagh."

"You surprize me!" cries Mrs. Ellison. "Sure, you are not in earnest?"

"Indeed, madam," returned he, "I am seriously in earnest. And, what is more, I am convinced she would of her own accord refuse to go."

"Now, madam," said Mrs. Ellison, "you are to answer for yourself: and I will for your husband, that, if you have a desire to go, he will not refuse you."

"I hope, madam," answered Amelia with great gravity, "I shall never desire to go to any place contrary to Mr. Booth's inclinations."

"Did ever mortal hear the like?" said Mrs. Ellison; "you are enough to spoil the best husband in the universe. Inclinations! what, is a woman to be governed then by her husband's inclinations, though they are never so unreasonable?"

"Pardon me, madam," said Amelia; "I will not suppose Mr. Booth's inclinations ever can be unreasonable. I am very much obliged to you for the offer you have made me; but I beg you will not mention it any more; for, after what Mr. Booth hath declared, if Ranelagh was a heaven upon earth, I would refuse to go to it."

"I thank you, my dear," cries Booth; "I do assure you, you oblige me beyond my power of ex-

Digitized by Google

pression by what you say; but I will endeavour to shew you, both my sensibility of such goodness, and my lasting gratitude to it."

"And pray, sir," cries Mrs. Ellison, "what can be your objection to your lady's going to a place which, I will venture to say, is as reputable as any about town, and which is frequented by the best company?"

"Pardon me, good Mrs. Ellison," said Booth: "as my wife is so good to acquiesce without knowing my reasons, I am not, I think, obliged to assign them to any other person."

"Well," cries Mrs. Ellison, "if I had been told this, I would not have believed it. What, refuse your lady an innocent diversion, and that too when you have not the pretence to say it would cost you a farthing?"

"Why will you say any more on this subject, dear madam?" cries Amelia. "All diversions are to me matters of such indifference, that the bare inclinations of any one for whom I have the least value would at all times turn the balance of mine. I am sure then, after what Mr. Booth hath said ——"

"My dear," cries he, taking her up hastily, "I sincerely ask your pardon; I spoke inadvertently, and in a passion. I never once thought of controuling you, nor ever would. Nay, I said in the same breath you would not go; and, upon my honour, I meant nothing more."

"My dear," said she, "you have no need of making any apology. I am not in the least offended, and am convinced you will never deny me what I shall desire."

Digitized by Google

"Try him, try him, madam," cries Mrs. Ellison; "I will be judged by all the women in town if it is possible for a wife to ask her husband anything more reasonable. You can't conceive what a sweet, charming, elegant, delicious place it is. Paradise itself can hardly be equal to it."

"I beg you will excuse me, madam," said Amelia; "nay, I entreat you will ask me no more; for be assured I must and will refuse. Do let me desire you to give the ticket to poor Mrs. Bennet. I believe it would greatly oblige her."

"Pardon me, madam," said Mrs. Ellison; "if you will not accept of it, I am not so distressed for want of company as to go to such a public place with all sort of people neither. I am always very glad to see Mrs. Bennet at my own house, because I look upon her as a very good sort of woman; but I don't chuse to be seen with such people in public places."

Amelia exprest some little indignation at this last speech, which she declared to be entirely beyond her comprehension; and soon after, Mrs. Ellison, finding all her efforts to prevail on Amelia were ineffectual, took her leave, giving Mr. Booth two or three sarcastical words, and a much more sarcastical look, at her departure.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER SIX

A SCENE IN WHICH SOME LADIES WILL POSSIBLY THINK AMELIA'S CONDUCT EXCEPTIONABLE.

BOOTH and his wife being left alone, a solemn silence prevailed during a few minutes. At last Amelia, who, though a good, was yet a human creature, said to her husband, "Pray, my dear, do inform me what could put you into so great a passion when Mrs. Ellison first offered me the tickets for this masquerade?"

"I had rather you would not ask me," said Booth. "You have obliged me greatly in your ready acquiescence with my desire, and you will add greatly to the obligation by not enquiring the reason of it. This you may depend upon, Amelia, that your good and happiness are the great objects of all my wishes, and the end I propose in all my actions. This view alone could tempt me to refuse you anything, or to conceal anything from you."

"I will appeal to yourself," answered she, "whether this be not using me too much like a child, and whether I can possibly help being a little offended at it?"

"Not in the least," replied he; "I use you only with the tenderness of a friend. I would only en-

Digitized by Google

deavour to conceal that from you which I think would give you uneasiness if you knew. These are called the pious frauds of friendship."

"I detest all fraud," says she; "and pious is too good an epithet to be joined to so odious a word. You have often, you know, tried these frauds with no better effect than to teize and torment me. You cannot imagine, my dear, but that I must have a violent desire to know the reason of words which I own I never expected to have heard. And the more you have shown a reluctance to tell me, the more eagerly I have longed to know. Nor can this be called a vain curiosity, since I seem so much interested in this affair. If after all this, you still insist on keeping the secret, I will convince you I am not ignorant of the duty of a wife by my obedience; but I cannot help telling you at the same time you will make me one of the most miserable of women."

"That is," cries he, "in other words, my dear Emily, to say, I will be contented without the secret, but I am resolved to know it, nevertheless."

"Nay, if you say so," cries she, "I am convinced you will tell me. Positively, dear Billy, I must and will know."

"Why, then, positively," says Booth, "I will tell you. And I think I shall then shew you that, however well you may know the duty of a wife, I am not always able to behave like a husband. In a word then, my dear, the secret is no more than this; I am unwilling you should receive any more presents from my lord."

Digitized by Google

"Mercy upon me!" cries she, with all the marks of astonishment; "what! a masquerade ticket!" —

"Yes, my dear," cries he; "that is, perhaps, the very worst and most dangerous of all. Few men make presents of those tickets to ladies without intending to meet them at the place. And what do we know of your companion? To be sincere with you, I have not liked her behaviour for some time. What might be the consequence of going with such a woman to such a place, to meet such a person, I tremble to think. And now, my dear, I have told you my reason of refusing her offer with some little vehemence, and I think I need explain myself no farther."

"You need not, indeed, sir," answered she. "Good Heavens! did I ever expect to hear this? I can appeal to heaven, nay, I will appeal to yourself, Mr. Booth, if I have ever done anything to deserve such a suspicion. If ever any action of mine, nay, if ever any thought, had stained the innocence of my soul, I could be contented."

"How cruelly do you mistake me!" said Booth. "What suspicion have I ever shewn?"

"Can you ask it," answered she, "after what you have just now declared?"

"If I have declared any suspicion of you," replied he, "or if ever I entertained a thought leading that way, may the worst of evils that ever afflicted human nature attend me! I know the pure innocence of that tender bosom, I do know it, my lovely angel, and adore it. The snares which might be laid for that innocence were alone the cause of my apprehension. I feared what a wicked and voluptuous man, resolved

Digitized by Google

to sacrifice everything to the gratification of a sensual appetite with the most delicious repast, might attempt. If ever I injured the unspotted whiteness of thy virtue in my imagination, may hell ——"

"Do not terrify me," cries she, interrupting him, "with such imprecations. O, Mr. Booth! Mr. Booth! you must well know that a woman's virtue is always her sufficient guard. No husband, without suspecting that, can suspect any danger from those snares you mention; and why, if you are liable to take such things into your head, may not your suspicions fall on me as well as on any other? for sure nothing was ever more unjust, I will not say ungrateful, than the suspicions which you have bestowed on his lordship. I do solemnly declare, in all the times I have seen the poor man, he hath never once offered the least forwardness. His behaviour hath been polite indeed, but rather remarkably distant than otherwise. Particularly when we played at cards together. I don't remember he spoke ten words to me all the evening; and when I was at his house, though he shewed the greatest fondness imaginable to the children, he took so little notice of me, that a vain woman would have been very little pleased with him. And if he gave them many presents, he never offered me one. The first, indeed, which he ever offered me was that which you in that kind manner forced me to refuse."

"All this may be only the effect of art," said Booth. "I am convinced he doth, nay, I am convinced he must like you; and my good friend James, who perfectly well knows the world, told me, that

Digitized by Google

his lordship's character was that of the most profuse in his pleasures with women; nay, what said Mrs. James this very evening? 'His lordship is extremely generous — where he likes.' I shall never forget the sneer with which she spoke those last words."

"I am convinced they injure him," cries Amelia. "As for Mrs. James, she was always given to be censorious; I remarked it in her long ago, as her greatest fault. And for the colonel, I believe he may find faults enow of this kind in his own bosom, without searching after them among his neighbours. I am sure he hath the most impudent look of all the men I know; and I solemnly declare, the very last time he was here he put me out of countenance more than once."

"Colonel James," answered Booth, "may have his faults very probably. I do not look upon him as a saint, nor do I believe he desires I should; but what interest could he have in abusing this lord's character to me? or why should I question his truth, when he assured me that my lord had never done an act of beneficence in his life but for the sake of some woman whom he lusted after?"

"Then I myself can confute him," replied Amelia: "for, besides his services to you, which, for the future, I shall wish to forget, and his kindness to my little babes, how inconsistent is the character which James gives of him with his lordship's behaviour to his own nephew and niece, whose extreme fondness of their uncle sufficiently proclaims his goodness to them? I need not mention all that I have heard from Mrs. Ellison, every word of which

Digitized by Google

I believe; for I have great reason to think, notwithstanding some little levity, which, to give her her due, she sees and condemns in herself, she is a very good sort of woman."

"Well, my dear," cries Booth, "I may have been deceived, and I heartily hope I am so; but in cases of this nature it is always good to be on the surest side; for, as Congreve says,

'The wise too jealous are: fools too secure.'"

Here Amelia burst into tears, upon which Booth immediately caught her in his arms, and endeavoured to comfort her. Passion, however, for a while obstructed her speech, and at last she cried, "O, Mr. Booth! can I bear to hear the word jealousy from your mouth?"

"Why, my love," said Booth, "will you so fatally misunderstand my meaning? how often shall I protest that it is not of you, but of him, that I was jealous? If you could look into my breast, and there read all the most secret thoughts of my heart, you would not see one faint idea to your dishonour."

"I don't misunderstand you, my dear," said she, "so much as I am afraid you misunderstand yourself. What is it you fear?—you mention not force, but snares. Is not this to confess, at least, that you have some doubt of my understanding? do you then really imagine me so weak as to be cheated of my virtue?—am I to be deceived into an affection for a man before I perceive the least inward hint of my danger? No, Mr. Booth, believe me, a woman must be a fool indeed who can have in earnest such an

Digitized by Google

excuse for her actions. I have not, I think, any very high opinion of my judgment, but so far I shall rely upon it, that no man breathing could have any such designs as you have apprehended without my immediately seeing them; and how I should then act I hope my whole conduct to you hath sufficiently declared."

"Well, my dear," cries Booth, "I beg you will mention it no more; if possible, forget it. I hope, nay, I believe, I have been in the wrong; pray forgive me."

"I will, I do forgive you, my dear," said she, "if forgiveness be a proper word for one whom you have rather made miserable than angry; but let me entreat you to banish for ever all such suspicions from your mind. I hope Mrs. Ellison hath not discovered the real cause of your passion; but, poor woman, if she had, I am convinced it would go no farther. Oh, Heavens! I would not for the world it should reach his lordship's ears. You would lose the best friend that ever man had. Nay, I would not for his own sake, poor man; for I really believe it would affect him greatly, and I must, I cannot help having an esteem for so much goodness. An esteem which, by this dear hand," said she, taking Booth's hand and kissing it, "no man alive shall ever obtain by making love to me."

Booth caught her in his arms and tenderly embraced her. After which the reconciliation soon became complete; and Booth, in the contemplation of his happiness, entirely buried all his jealous thoughts.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER SEVEN

A CHAPTER IN WHICH THERE IS MUCH LEARNING.

THE next morning, whilst Booth was gone to take his morning walk, Amelia went down into Mrs. Ellison's apartment, where, though she was received with a great civility, yet she found that lady was not at all pleased with Mr. Booth; and, by some hints which dropt from her in conversation, Amelia very greatly apprehended that Mrs. Ellison had too much suspicion of her husband's real uneasiness; for that lady declared very openly she could not help perceiving what sort of man Mr. Booth was: "And though I have the greatest regard for you, madam, in the world," said she, "yet I think myself in honour obliged not to impose on his lordship, who, I know very well, hath conceived his greatest liking to the captain on my telling him that he was the best husband in the world."

Amelia's fears gave her much disturbance, and when her husband returned she acquainted him with them; upon which occasion, as it was natural, she resumed a little the topic of their former discourse, nor could she help casting, though in very gentle terms, some slight blame on Booth for having entertained a suspicion which, she said, might in its con-

Digitized by Google

sequence very possibly prove their ruin, and occasion the loss of his lordship's friendship.

Booth became highly affected with what his wife said, and the more, as he had just received a note from Colonel James, informing him that the colonel had heard of a vacant company in the regiment which Booth had mentioned to him, and that he had been with his lordship about it, who had promised to use his utmost interest to obtain him the command.

The poor man now exprest the utmost concern for his yesterday's behaviour, said "he believed the devil had taken possession of him," and concluded with crying out, "Sure I was born, my dearest creature, to be your torment."

Amelia no sooner saw her husband's distress than she instantly forbore whatever might seem likely to aggravate it, and applied herself, with all her power, to comfort him. "If you will give me leave to offer my advice, my dearest soul," said she, "I think all might yet be remedied. I think you know me too well to suspect that the desire of diversion should induce me to mention what I am now going to propose; and in that confidence I will ask you to let me accept my lord's and Mrs. Ellison's offer, and go to the masquerade. No matter how little while I stay there; if you desire it I will not be an hour from you. I can make an hundred excuses to come home, or tell a real truth, and say I am tired with the place. The bare going will cure everything."

Amelia had no sooner done speaking than Booth immediately approved her advice, and readily gave

Digitized by Google

his consent. He could not, however, help saying, that the shorter her stay was there, the more agreeable it would be to him; "for you know, my dear," said he, "I would never willingly be a moment out of your sight."

In the afternoon Amelia sent to invite Mrs. Ellison to a dish of tea; and Booth undertook to laugh off all that had passed yesterday, in which attempt the abundant good humour of that lady gave him great hopes of success.

Mrs. Bennet came that afternoon to make a visit, and was almost an hour with Booth and Amelia before the entry of Mrs. Ellison.

Mr. Booth had hitherto rather disliked this young lady, and had wondered at the pleasure which Amelia declared she took in her company. This afternoon, however, he changed his opinion, and liked her almost as much as his wife had done. She did indeed behave at this time with more than ordinary gaiety; and good humour gave a glow to her countenance that set off her features, which were very pretty, to the best advantage, and lessened the deadness that had usually appeared in her complexion.

But if Booth was now pleased with Mrs. Bennet, Amelia was still more pleased with her than ever. For, when their discourse turned on love, Amelia discovered that her new friend had all the same sentiments on that subject with herself. In the course of their conversation Booth gave Mrs. Bennet a hint of wishing her a good husband, upon which both the ladies declaimed against second marriages with equal vehemence.

Digitized by Google

Upon this occasion Booth and his wife discovered a talent in their visitant to which they had been before entirely strangers, and for which they both greatly admired her, and this was, that the lady was a good scholar, in which, indeed, she had the advantage of poor Amelia, whose reading was confined to English plays and poetry; besides which, I think she had conversed only with the divinity of the great and learned Dr. Barrow, and with the histories of the excellent Bishop Burnet.

Amelia delivered herself on the subject of second marriages with much eloquence and great good sense; but when Mrs. Bennet came to give her opinion she spoke in the following manner: "I shall not enter into the question concerning the legality of bigamy. Our laws certainly allow it, and so, I think, doth our religion. We are now debating only on the decency of it, and in this light I own myself as strenuous an advocate against it as any Roman matron would have been in those ages of the commonwealth when it was held to be infamous. For my own part, how great a paradox soever my opinion may seem, I solemnly declare, I see but little difference between having two husbands at one time and at several times; and of this I am very confident, that the same degree of love for a first husband which preserves a woman in the one case will preserve her in the other. There is one argument which I scarce know how to deliver before you, sir; but — if a woman hath lived with her first husband without having children, I think it unpardonable in her to carry barrenness into a second family.

Digitized by Google

On the contrary, if she hath children by her first husband, to give them a second father is still more unpardonable."

"But suppose, madam," cries Booth, interrupting her with a smile, "she should have had children by her first husband, and have lost them?"

"That is a case," answered she, with a sigh, "which I did not desire to think of, and I must own it the most favourable light in which a second marriage can be seen. But the Scriptures, as Petrarch observes, rather suffer them than commend them; and St. Jerom speaks against them with the utmost bitterness." — "I remember," cries Booth (who was willing either to shew his learning, or to draw out the lady's), "a very wise law of Charondas, the famous lawgiver of Thurium, by which men who married a second time were removed from all public councils; for it was scarce reasonable to suppose that he who was so great a fool in his own family should be wise in public affairs. And though second marriages were permitted among the Romans, yet they were at the same time discouraged, and those Roman widows who refused them were held in high esteem, and honoured with what Valerius Maximus calls the Corona Pudicitiæ. In the noble family of Camilli there was not, in many ages, a single instance of this, which Martial calls adultery:

Quæ toties nubit, non nubit; adultera lege est."

"True, sir," says Mrs. Bennet, "and Virgil calls this a violation of chastity, and makes Dido speak of it with the utmost detestation:

Digitized by Google

Sed mihi vel Tellus optem prius ima dehiscat
Vel Pater omnipotens adigat me fulmine ad umbras,
Pallentes umbras Erebi, noctemque profundam,
Ante, pudor, quam te violo, aut tua jura resolvo.
Ille meos, primum qui me sibi junxit, amores,
Ille habeat semper secum, servetque Sepulchro."

She repeated these lines with so strong an emphasis, that she almost frightened Amelia out of her wits, and not a little staggered Booth, who was himself no contemptible scholar. He expressed great admiration of the lady's learning; upon which she said it was all the fortune given her by her father, and all the dower left her by her husband; "and sometimes," said she, "I am inclined to think I enjoy more pleasure from it than if they had bestowed on me what the world would in general call more valuable." — She then took occasion, from the surprize which Booth had affected to conceive at her repeating Latin with so good a grace, to comment on that great absurdity (for so she termed it) of excluding women from learning; for which they were equally qualified with the men, and in which so many had made so notable a proficiency; for a proof of which she mentioned Madam Dacier, and many others.

Though both Booth and Amelia outwardly concurred with her sentiments, it may be a question whether they did not assent rather out of complaisance than from their real judgment.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONTAINING SOME UNACCOUNTABLE BEHAVIOUR IN MRS. ELLISON.

MRS. ELLISON made her entrance at the end of the preceding discourse. At her first appearance she put on an unusual degree of formality and reserve; but when Amelia had acquainted her that she designed to accept the favour intended her, she soon began to alter the gravity of her muscles, and presently fell in with that ridicule which Booth thought proper to throw on his yesterday's behaviour.

The conversation now became very lively and pleasant, in which Booth having mentioned the discourse that passed in the last chapter, and having greatly complimented Mrs. Bennet's speech on that occasion, Mrs. Ellison, who was as strenuous an advocate on the other side, began to rally that lady extremely, declaring it was a certain sign she intended to marry again soon. "Married ladies," cries she, "I believe, sometimes think themselves in earnest in such declarations, though they are oftener perhaps meant as compliments to their husbands; but, when widows exclaim loudly against second marriages, I would always lay a wager that the man, if not the wedding-day, is absolutely fixed on."

Digitized by Google

Mrs. Bennet made very little answer to this sarcasm. Indeed, she had scarce opened her lips from the time of Mrs. Ellison's coming into the room, and had grown particularly grave at the mention of the masquerade. Amelia imputed this to her being left out of the party, a matter which is often no small mortification to human pride, and in a whisper asked Mrs. Ellison if she could not procure a third ticket, to which she received an absolute negative.

During the whole time of Mrs. Bennet's stay, which was above an hour afterwards, she remained perfectly silent, and looked extremely melancholy. This made Amelia very uneasy, as she concluded she had guessed the cause of her vexation. In which opinion she was the more confirmed from certain looks of no very pleasant kind which Mrs. Bennet now and then cast on Mrs. Ellison, and the more than ordinary concern that appeared in the former lady's countenance whenever the masquerade was mentioned, and which, unfortunately, was the principal topic of their discourse; for Mrs. Ellison gave a very elaborate description of the extreme beauty of the place and elegance of the diversion.

When Mrs. Bennet was departed, Amelia could not help again soliciting Mrs. Ellison for another ticket, declaring she was certain Mrs. Bennet had a great inclination to go with them; but Mrs. Ellison again excused herself from asking it of his lordship. "Besides, madam," says she, "if I would go thither with Mrs. Bennet, which, I own to you, I don't chuse, as she is a person whom *nobody knows*,

Digitized by Google

I very much doubt whether she herself would like it; for she is a woman of a very unaccountable turn. All her delight lies in books; and as for public diversions, I have heard her often declare her abhorrence of them."

"What then," said Amelia, "could occasion all that gravity from the moment the masquerade was mentioned?"

"As to that," answered the other, "there is no guessing. You have seen her altogether as grave before now. She hath had these fits of gravity at times ever since the death of her husband."

"Poor creature!" cries Amelia; "I heartily pity her, for she must certainly suffer a great deal on these occasions. I declare I have taken a strange fancy to her."

"Perhaps you would not like her so well if you knew her thoroughly," answered Mrs. Ellison. — "She is, upon the whole, but of a whimsical temper; and, if you will take my opinion, you should not cultivate too much intimacy with her. I know you will never mention what I say; but she is like some pictures, which please best at a distance."

Amelia did not seem to agree with these sentiments, and she greatly importuned Mrs. Ellison to be more explicit, but to no purpose; she continued to give only dark hints to Mrs. Bennet's disadvantage; and, if ever she let drop something a little too harsh, she failed not immediately to contradict herself by throwing some gentle commendations into the other scale; so that her conduct appeared utterly unaccountable to Amelia, and, upon the whole, she

Digitized by Google

knew not whether to conclude Mrs. Ellison to be a friend or enemy to Mrs. Bennet.

During this latter conversation Booth was not in the room, for he had been summoned down-stairs by the serjeant, who came to him with news from Murphy, whom he had met that evening, and who assured the serjeant that, if he was desirous of recovering the debt which he had before pretended to have on Booth, he might shortly have an opportunity, for that there was to be a very strong petition to the board the next time they sat. Murphy said further that he need not fear having his money, for that, to his certain knowledge, the captain had several things of great value, and even his children had gold watches.

This greatly alarmed Booth, and still more when the serjeant reported to him, from Murphy, that all these things had been seen in his possession within a day last past. He now plainly perceived, as he thought, that Murphy himself, or one of his emissaries, had been the supposed madman; and he now very well accounted to himself, in his own mind, for all that had happened, conceiving that the design was to examine into the state of his effects, and to try whether it was worth his creditors' while to plunder him by law.

At his return to his apartment he communicated what he had heard to Amelia and Mrs. Ellison, not disguising his apprehensions of the enemy's intentions; but Mrs. Ellison endeavoured to laugh him out of his fears, calling him faint-hearted, and assuring him he might depend on her lawyer. "Till

Digitized by Google

you hear from him," said she, "you may rest entirely contented: for, take my word for it, no danger can happen to you of which you will not be timely apprized by him. And as for the fellow that had the impudence to come into your room, if he was sent on such an errand as you mention, I heartily wish I had been at home; I would have secured him safe with a constable, and have carried him directly before justice Thrasher. I know the justice is an enemy to bailiffs on his own account."

This heartening speech a little roused the courage of Booth, and somewhat comforted Amelia, though the spirits of both had been too much hurried to suffer them either to give or receive much entertainment that evening; which Mrs. Ellison perceiving soon took her leave, and left this unhappy couple to seek relief from sleep, that powerful friend to the distrest, though, like other powerful friends, he is not always ready to give his assistance to those who want it most.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER NINE

CONTAINING A VERY STRANGE INCIDENT.

WHEN the husband and wife were alone they again talked over the news which the serjeant had brought; on which occasion Amelia did all she could to conceal her own fears, and to quiet those of her husband. At last she turned the conversation to another subject, and poor Mrs. Bennet was brought on the carpet. "I should be sorry," cries Amelia, "to find I had conceived an affection for a bad woman; and yet I begin to fear Mrs. Ellison knows something of her more than she cares to discover; why else should she be unwilling to be seen with her in public? Besides, I have observed that Mrs. Ellison hath been always backward to introduce her to me, nor would ever bring her to my apartment, though I have often desired her. Nay, she hath given me frequent hints not to cultivate the acquaintance. What do you think, my dear? I should be very sorry to contract an intimacy with a wicked person."

"Nay, my dear," cries Booth, "I know no more of her, nor indeed hardly so much as yourself. But this I think, that if Mrs. Ellison knows any reason why she should not have introduced Mrs. Bennet into

Digitized by Google

your company, she was very much in the wrong in introducing her into it."

In discourses of this kind they past the remainder of the evening. In the morning Booth rose early, and, going down-stairs, received from little Betty a sealed note, which contained the following words:

> Beware, beware, beware;
> For I apprehend a dreadful snare
> Is laid for virtuous innocence,
> Under a friend's false pretence.

Booth immediately enquired of the girl who brought this note? and was told it came by a chair-man, who, having delivered it, departed without saying a word.

He was extremely staggered at what he read, and presently referred the advice to the same affair on which he had received those hints from Atkinson the preceding evening; but when he came to consider the words more maturely he could not so well reconcile the two last lines of this poetical epistle, if it may be so called, with any danger which the law gave him reason to apprehend. Mr. Murphy and his gang could not well be said to attack either his innocence or virtue; nor did they attack him under any colour or pretence of friendship.

After much deliberation on this matter a very strange suspicion came into his head; and this was, that he was betrayed by Mrs. Ellison. He had, for some time, conceived no very high opinion of that good gentlewoman, and he now began to suspect that she was bribed to betray him. By this means he thought he could best account for the strange appearance of the supposed madman. And when this con-

Digitized by Google

ceit once had birth in his mind, several circumstances nourished and improved it. Among these were her jocose behaviour and raillery on that occasion, and her attempt to ridicule his fears from the message which the serjeant had brought him.

This suspicion was indeed preposterous, and not at all warranted by, or even consistent with, the character and whole behaviour of Mrs. Ellison, but it was the only one which at that time suggested itself to his mind; and, however blameable it might be, it was certainly not unnatural in him to entertain it; for so great a torment is anxiety to the human mind, that we always endeavour to relieve ourselves from it by guesses, however doubtful or uncertain; on all which occasions, dislike and hatred are the surest guides to lead our suspicion to its object.

When Amelia rose to breakfast, Booth produced the note which he had received, saying, "My dear, you have so often blamed me for keeping secrets from you, and I have so often, indeed, endeavoured to conceal secrets of this kind from you with such ill success, that I think I shall never more attempt it." Amelia read the letter hastily, and seemed not a little discomposed; then, turning to Booth with a very disconsolate countenance, she said, "Sure fortune takes a delight in terrifying us! what can be the meaning of this?" Then, fixing her eyes attentively on the paper, she perused it for some time, till Booth cried, "How is it possible, my Emily, you can read such stuff patiently? the verses are certainly as bad as ever were written." — "I was trying, my dear," answered she, "to recollect the hand; for I will take

Digitized by Google

my oath I have seen it before, and that very lately;" and suddenly she cried out, with great emotion, "I remember it perfectly now; it is Mrs. Bennet's hand. Mrs. Ellison shewed me a letter from her but a day or two ago. It is a very remarkable hand, and I am positive it is hers."

"If it be hers," cries Booth, "what can she possibly mean by the latter part of her caution? sure Mrs. Ellison hath no intention to betray us."

"I know not what she means," answered Amelia, "but I am resolved to know immediately, for I am certain of the hand. By the greatest luck in the world, she told me yesterday where her lodgings were, when she pressed me exceedingly to come and see her. She lives but a very few doors from us, and I will go to her this moment."

Booth made not the least objection to his wife's design. His curiosity was, indeed, as great as hers, and so was his impatience to satisfy it, though he mentioned not this his impatience to Amelia; and perhaps it had been well for him if he had.

Amelia, therefore, presently equipped herself in her walking dress, and, leaving her children to the care of her husband, made all possible haste to Mrs. Bennet's lodgings.

Amelia waited near five minutes at Mrs. Bennet's door before any one came to open it; at length a maid servant appeared, who, being asked if Mrs. Bennet was at home, answered, with some confusion in her countenance, that she did not know; "but, madam," said she, "if you will send up your name, I will go and see." Amelia then told her name, and

Digitized by Google

the wench, after staying a considerable time, returned and acquainted her that Mrs. Bennet was at home. She was then ushered into a parlour and told that the lady would wait on her presently.

In this parlour Amelia cooled her heels, as the phrase is, near a quarter of an hour. She seemed, indeed, at this time, in the miserable situation of one of those poor wretches who make their morning visits to the great to solicit favours, or perhaps to solicit the payment of a debt, for both are alike treated as beggars, and the latter sometimes considered as the more troublesome beggars of the two.

During her stay here, Amelia observed the house to be in great confusion; a great bustle was heard above-stairs, and the maid ran up and down several times in a great hurry.

At length Mrs. Bennet herself came in. She was greatly disordered in her looks, and had, as the women call it, huddled on her cloaths in much haste; for, in truth, she was in bed when Amelia first came. Of this fact she informed her, as the only apology she could make for having caused her to wait so long for her company.

Amelia very readily accepted her apology, but asked her with a smile, if these early hours were usual with her? Mrs. Bennet turned as red as scarlet at the question, and answered, "No, indeed, dear madam. I am for the most part a very early riser; but I happened accidentally to sit up very late last night. I am sure I had little expectation of your intending me such a favour this morning."

Amelia, looking very stedfastly at her, said, "Is

Digitized by Google

it possible, madam, you should think such a note as this would raise no curiosity in me?" She then gave her the note, asking her if she did not know the hand.

Mrs. Bennet appeared in the utmost surprize and confusion at this instant. Indeed, if Amelia had conceived but the slightest suspicion before, the behaviour of the lady would have been a sufficient confirmation to her of the truth. She waited not, therefore, for an answer, which, indeed, the other seemed in no haste to give, but conjured her in the most earnest manner to explain to her the meaning of so extraordinary an act of friendship; "for so," said she, "I esteem it, being convinced you must have sufficient reason for the warning you have given me."

Mrs. Bennet, after some hesitation, answered, "I need not, I believe, tell you how much I am surprized at what you have shewn me; and the chief reason of my surprize is, how you came to discover my hand. Sure, madam, you have not shewn it to Mrs. Ellison?"

Amelia declared she had not, but desired she would question her no farther. "What signifies how I discovered it, since your hand it certainly is?"

"I own it is," cries Mrs. Bennet, recovering her spirits, "and since you have not shewn it to that woman I am satisfied. I begin to guess now whence you might have your information; but no matter; I wish I had never done anything of which I ought to be more ashamed. No one can, I think, justly

Digitized by Google

accuse me of a crime on that account; and I thank Heaven my shame will never be directed by the false opinion of the world. Perhaps it was wrong to shew my letter, but when I consider all circumstances I can forgive it."

"Since you have guessed the truth," said Amelia, "I am not obliged to deny it. She, indeed, shewed me your letter, but I am sure you have not the least reason to be ashamed of it. On the contrary, your behaviour on so melancholy an occasion was highly praiseworthy; and your bearing up under such afflictions as the loss of a husband in so dreadful a situation was truly great and heroical."

"So Mrs. Ellison then hath shewn you my letter?" cries Mrs. Bennet eagerly.

"Why, did not you guess it yourself?" answered Amelia; "otherwise I am sure I have betrayed my honour in mentioning it. I hope you have not drawn me inadvertently into any breach of my promise. Did you not assert, and that with an absolute certainty, that you knew she had shewn me your letter, and that you was not angry with her for so doing?"

"I am so confused," replied Mrs. Bennet, "that I scarce know what I say; yes, yes, I remember I did say so — I wish I had no greater reason to be angry with her than that."

"For Heaven's sake," cries Amelia, "do not delay my request any longer; what you say now greatly increases my curiosity, and my mind will be on the rack till you discover your whole meaning; for I am more and more convinced that something of

Digitized by Google

the utmost importance was the purport of your message."

"Of the utmost importance, indeed," cries Mrs. Bennet; "at least you will own my apprehensions were sufficiently well founded. O gracious Heaven! how happy shall I think myself if I should have proved your preservation! I will, indeed, explain my meaning; but, in order to disclose all my fears in their just colours, I must unfold my whole history to you. Can you have patience, madam, to listen to the story of the most unfortunate of women?"

Amelia assured her of the highest attention, and Mrs. Bennet soon after began to relate what is written in the seventh book of this history.

Digitized by Google

BOOK VII

CHAPTER ONE

A VERY SHORT CHAPTER, AND CONSEQUENTLY REQUIRING NO PREFACE.

MRS. BENNET having fastened the door, and both the ladies having taken their places, she once or twice offered to speak, when passion stopt her utterance; and, after a minute's silence, she burst into a flood of tears. Upon which Amelia, expressing the utmost tenderness for her, as well by her look as by her accent, cried, "What can be the reason, dear madam, of all this emotion?" "O, Mrs. Booth!" answered she, "I find I have undertaken what I am not able to perform. You would not wonder at my emotion if you knew you had an adulteress and a murderer now standing before you."

Amelia turned pale as death at these words, which Mrs. Bennet observing, collected all the force she was able, and, a little composing her countenance, cried, "I see, madam, I have terrified you with such dreadful words; but I hope you will not think me guilty of these crimes in the blackest degree." "Guilty!" cries Amelia. "O Heavens!" "I believe, indeed, your candour," continued Mrs. Bennet, "will be read-

Digitized by Google

ier to acquit me than I am to acquit myself. Indiscretion, at least, the highest, most unpardonable indiscretion, I shall always lay to my own charge: and, when I reflect on the fatal consequences, I can never, never forgive myself." Here she again began to lament in so bitter a manner, that Amelia endeavoured, as much as she could (for she was herself greatly shocked), to soothe and comfort her; telling her that, if indiscretion was her highest crime, the unhappy consequences made her rather an unfortunate than a guilty person; and concluded by saying —"Indeed, madam, you have raised my curiosity to the highest pitch, and I beg you will proceed with your story."

Mrs. Bennet then seemed a second time going to begin her relation, when she cried out, "I would, if possible, tire you with no more of my unfortunate life than just with that part which leads to a catastrophe in which I think you may yourself be interested; but I protest I am at a loss where to begin."

"Begin wherever you please, dear madam," cries Amelia; "but I beg you will consider my impatience." "I do consider it," answered Mrs. Bennet; "and therefore would begin with that part of my story which leads directly to what concerns yourself; for how, indeed, should my life produce anything worthy your notice?" "Do not say so, madam," cries Amelia; "I assure you I have long suspected there were some very remarkable incidents in your life, and have only wanted an opportunity to impart to you my desire of hearing them: I beg, therefore,

Digitized by Google

you would make no more apologies." "I will not, madam," cries Mrs. Bennet, "and yet I would avoid anything trivial; though, indeed, in stories of distress, especially where love is concerned, many little incidents may appear trivial to those who have never felt the passion, which, to delicate minds, are the most interesting part of the whole." "Nay, but, dear madam," cries Amelia, "this is all preface."

"Well, madam," answered Mrs. Bennet, "I will consider your impatience." She then rallied all her spirits in the best manner she could, and began as is written in the next chapter.

And here possibly the reader will blame Mrs. Bennet for taking her story so far back, and relating so much of her life in which Amelia had no concern; but, in truth, she was desirous of inculcating a good opinion of herself, from recounting those transactions where her conduct was unexceptionable, before she came to the more dangerous and suspicious part of her character. This I really suppose to have been her intention; for to sacrifice the time and patience of Amelia at such a season to the mere love of talking of herself would have been as unpardonable in her as the bearing it was in Amelia a proof of the most perfect good breeding.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER TWO

THE BEGINNING OF MRS. BENNET'S HISTORY.

I WAS the younger of two daughters of a clergyman in Essex; of one in whose praise if I should indulge my fond heart in speaking, I think my invention could not outgo the reality. He was indeed well worthy of the cloth he wore; and that, I think, is the highest character a man can obtain.

"During the first part of my life, even till I reached my sixteenth year, I can recollect nothing to relate to you. All was one long serene day, in looking back upon which, as when we cast our eyes on a calm sea, no object arises to my view. All appears one scene of happiness and tranquillity.

"On the day, then, when I became sixteen years old, must I begin my history; for on that day I first tasted the bitterness of sorrow.

"My father, besides those prescribed by our religion, kept five festivals every year. These were on his wedding-day, and on the birthday of each of his little family; on these occasions he used to invite two or three neighbours to his house, and to indulge himself, as he said, in great excess; for so he called drinking a pint of very small punch; and, indeed, it might appear excess to one who on other days rarely tasted any liquor stronger than small beer.

Digitized by Google

"Upon my unfortunate birthday, then, when we were all in a high degree of mirth, my mother having left the room after dinner, and staying away pretty long, my father sent me to see for her. I went according to his orders; but, though I searched the whole house and called after her without doors, I could neither see nor hear her. I was a little alarmed at this (though far from suspecting any great mischief had befallen her), and ran back to acquaint my father, who answered coolly (for he was a man of the calmest temper), 'Very well, my dear, I suppose she is not gone far, and will be here immediately.' Half an hour or more past after this, when, she not returning, my father himself expressed some surprize at her stay; declaring it must be some matter of importance which could detain her at that time from her company. His surprize now encreased every minute, and he began to grow uneasy, and to shew sufficient symptoms in his countenance of what he felt within. He then despatched the servant-maid to enquire after her mistress in the parish, but waited not her return; for she was scarce gone out of doors before he begged leave of his guests to go himself on the same errand. The company now all broke up, and attended my father, all endeavouring to give him hopes that no mischief had happened. They searched the whole parish, but in vain; they could neither see my mother, nor hear any news of her. My father returned home in a state little short of distraction. His friends in vain attempted to administer either advice or comfort; he threw himself on the floor in the most bitter agonies of despair.

Digitized by Google

"Whilst he lay in this condition, my sister and myself lying by him, all equally, I believe, and completely miserable, our old servant-maid came into the room and cried out, her mind misgave her that she knew where her mistress was. Upon these words, my father sprung from the floor, and asked her eagerly, where? But oh! Mrs. Booth, how can I describe the particulars of a scene to you, the remembrance of which chills my blood with horror, and which the agonies of my mind, when it past, made all a scene of confusion! The fact then in short was this: my mother, who was a most indulgent mistress to one servant, which was all we kept, was unwilling, I suppose, to disturb her at her dinner, and therefore went herself to fill her tea-kettle at a well, into which, stretching herself too far, as we imagine, the water then being very low, she fell with the tea-kettle in her hand. The missing this gave the poor old wretch the first hint of her suspicion, which, upon examination, was found to be too well grounded.

"What we all suffered on this occasion may more easily be felt than described." —— "It may indeed," answered Amelia, "and I am so sensible of it, that, unless you have a mind to see me faint before your face, I beg you will order me something; a glass of water, if you please." Mrs. Bennet immediately complied with her friend's request; a glass of water was brought, and some hartshorn drops infused into it; which Amelia having drank off, declared she found herself much better; and then Mrs. Bennet proceeded thus: —

Digitized by Google

"I will not dwell on a scene which I see hath already so much affected your tender heart, and which is as disagreeable to me to relate as it can be to you to hear. I will therefore only mention to you the behaviour of my father on this occasion, which was indeed becoming a philosopher and a Christian divine. On the day after my mother's funeral he sent for my sister and myself into his room, where, after many caresses and every demonstration of fatherly tenderness as well in silence as in words, he began to exhort us to bear with patience the great calamity that had befallen us; saying, 'That as every human accident, how terrible soever, must happen to us by divine permission at least, a due sense of our duty to our great Creator must teach us an absolute submission to his will. Not only religion, but common sense, must teach us this; for oh! my dear children,' cries he, 'how vain is all resistance, all repining! could tears wash back again my angel from the grave, I should drain all the juices of my body through my eyes; but oh, could we fill up that cursed well with our tears, how fruitless would be all our sorrow!'—I think I repeat you his very words; for the impression they made on me is never to be obliterated. He then proceeded to comfort us with the chearful thought that the loss was entirely our own, and that my mother was greatly a gainer by the accident which we lamented. 'I have a wife,' cries he, 'my children, and you have a mother, now amongst the heavenly choir; how selfish therefore is all our grief! how cruel to her are all our wishes!' In this manner he talked to us near half an hour,

Digitized by Google

though I must frankly own to you his arguments had not the immediate good effect on us which they deserved, for we retired from him very little the better for his exhortations; however, they became every day more and more forcible upon our recollection; indeed, they were greatly strengthened by his example; for in this, as in all other instances, he practised the doctrines which he taught. From this day he never mentioned my mother more, and soon after recovered his usual chearfulness in public; though I have reason to think he paid many a bitter sigh in private to that remembrance which neither philosophy nor Christianity could expunge.

"My father's advice, enforced by his example, together with the kindness of some of our friends, assisted by that ablest of all the mental physicians, Time, in a few months pretty well restored my tranquillity, when fortune made a second attack on my quiet. My sister, whom I dearly loved, and who as warmly returned my affection, had fallen into an ill state of health some time before the fatal accident which I have related. She was indeed at that time so much better, that we had great hopes of her perfect recovery; but the disorders of her mind on that dreadful occasion so affected her body, that she presently relapsed to her former declining state, and thence grew continually worse and worse, till, after a decay of near seven months, she followed my poor mother to the grave.

"I will not tire you, dear madam, with repetitions of grief; I will only mention two observations which have occurred to me from reflections on the two losses I have mentioned. The first is, that a mind once

Digitized by Google

violently hurt grows, as it were, callous to any future impressions of grief, and is never capable of feeling the same pangs a second time. The other observation is, that the arrows of fortune, as well as all others, derive their force from the velocity with which they are discharged; for, when they approach you by slow and perceptible degrees, they have but very little power to do you mischief.

"The truth of these observations I experienced, not only in my own heart, but in the behaviour of my father, whose philosophy seemed to gain a complete triumph over this latter calamity.

"Our family was now reduced to two, and my father grew extremely fond of me, as if he had now conferred an entire stock of affection on me, that had before been divided. His words, indeed, testified no less, for he daily called me his only darling, his whole comfort, his all. He committed the whole charge of his house to my care, and gave me the name of his little housekeeper, an appellation of which I was then as proud as any minister of state can be of his titles. But, though I was very industrious in the discharge of my occupation, I did not, however, neglect my studies, in which I had made so great a proficiency, that I was become a pretty good mistress of the Latin language, and had made some progress in the Greek. I believe, madam, I have formerly acquainted you, that learning was the chief estate I inherited of my father, in which he had instructed me from my earliest youth.

"The kindness of this good man had at length wiped off the remembrance of all losses; and I during

Digitized by Google

two years led a life of great tranquillity, I think I might almost say of perfect happiness.

"I was now in the nineteenth year of my age, when my father's good fortune removed us from the county of Essex into Hampshire, where a living was conferred on him by one of his old school-fellows, of twice the value of what he was before possessed of.

"His predecessor in this new living had died in very indifferent circumstances, and had left behind him a widow with two small children. My father, therefore, who, with great œconomy, had a most generous soul, bought the whole furniture of the parsonage-house at a very high price; some of it, indeed, he would have wanted; for, though our little habitation in Essex was most completely furnished, yet it bore no proportion to the largeness of that house in which he was now to dwell.

"His motive, however, to the purchase was, I am convinced, solely generosity; which appeared sufficiently by the price he gave, and may be farther inforced by the kindness he shewed the widow in another instance; for he assigned her an apartment for the use of herself and her little family, which, he told her, she was welcome to enjoy as long as it suited her conveniency.

"As this widow was very young, and generally thought to be tolerably pretty, though I own she had a cast with her eyes which I never liked, my father, you may suppose, acted from a less noble principle than I have hinted; but I must in justice acquit him, for these kind offers were made her before ever he had seen her face; and I have the

Digitized by Google

greatest reason to think that, for a long time after he had seen her, he beheld her with much indifference.

"This act of my father's gave me, when I first heard it, great satisfaction; for I may at least, with the modesty of the ancient philosophers, call myself a lover of generosity, but when I became acquainted with the widow I was still more delighted with what my father had done; for though I could not agree with those who thought her a consummate beauty, I must allow that she was very fully possessed of the power of making herself agreeable; and this power she exerted with so much success, with such indefatigable industry to oblige, that within three months I became in the highest manner pleased with my new acquaintance, and had contracted the most sincere friendship for her.

"But, if I was so pleased with the widow, my father was by this time enamoured of her. She had, indeed, by the most artful conduct in the world, so insinuated herself into his favour, so entirely infatuated him, that he never shewed the least marks of chearfulness in her absence, and could, in truth, scarce bear that she should be out of his sight.

"She had managed this matter so well (O, she is the most artful of women!) that my father's heart was gone before I ever suspected it was in danger. The discovery you may easily believe, madam, was not pleasing. The name of a mother-in-law sounded dreadful in my ears; nor could I bear the thought of parting again with a share in those dear affections, of which I had purchased the whole by the loss of a beloved mother and sister.

Digitized by Google

"In the first hurry and disorder of my mind on this occasion I committed a crime of the highest kind against all the laws of prudence and discretion. I took the young lady herself very roundly to task, treated her designs on my father as little better than a design to commit a theft, and in my passion, I believe, said she might be ashamed to think of marrying a man old enough to be her grandfather; for so in reality he almost was.

"The lady on this occasion acted finely the part of a hypocrite. She affected to be highly affronted at my unjust suspicions, as she called them; and proceeded to such asseverations of her innocence, that she almost brought me to discredit the evidence of my own eyes and ears.

"My father, however, acted much more honestly, for he fell the next day into a more violent passion with me that I had ever seen him in before, and asked me whether I intended to return his paternal fondness by assuming the right of controlling his inclinations? with more of the like kind, which fully convinced me what had passed between him and the lady, and how little I had injured her in my suspicions.

"Hitherto, I frankly own, my aversion to this match had been principally on my own account; for I had no ill opinion of the woman, though I thought neither her circumstances nor my father's age promised any kind of felicity from such an union; but now I learnt some particulars, which, had not our quarrel become public in the parish, I should perhaps have never known. In short, I was informed that this

Digitized by Google

gentle obliging creature, as she had at first appeared to me, had the spirit of a tigress, and was by many believed to have broken the heart of her first husband.

"The truth of this matter being confirmed to me upon examination, I resolved not to suppress it. On this occasion fortune seemed to favour me, by giving me a speedy opportunity of seeing my father alone and in good humour. He now first began to open his intended marriage, telling me that he had formerly had some religious objections to bigamy, but he had very fully considered the matter, and had satisfied himself of its legality. He then faithfully promised me that no second marriage should in the least impair his affection for me; and concluded with the highest eulogiums on the goodness of the widow, protesting that it was her virtues and not her person with which he was enamoured.

"I now fell upon my knees before him, and bathing his hand in my tears, which flowed very plentifully from my eyes, acquainted him with all I had heard, and was so very imprudent, I might almost say so cruel, to disclose the author of my information.

"My father heard me without any indication of passion, and answered coldly, that if there was any proof of such facts he should decline any further thoughts of this match: 'But, child,' said he, 'though I am far from suspecting the truth of what you tell me, as far as regards your knowledge, yet you know the inclination of the world to slander.' However, before we parted he promised to make a proper enquiry into what I had told him. — But I ask your pardon, dear madam, I am running minutely

Digitized by Google

into those particulars of my life in which you have not the least concern."

Amelia stopt her friend short in her apology; and though, perhaps, she thought her impertinent enough, yet (such was her good breeding) she gave her many assurances of a curiosity to know every incident of her life which she could remember; after which Mrs. Bennet proceeded as in the next chapter.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER THREE

CONTINUATION OF MRS. BENNET'S STORY.

I THINK, madam," said Mrs. Bennet, "I told you my father promised me to enquire farther into the affair, but he had hardly time to keep his word; for we separated pretty late in the evening and early the next morning he was married to the widow.

"But, though he gave no credit to my information, I had sufficient reason to think he did not forget it, by the resentment which he soon discovered to both the persons whom I had named as my informers.

"Nor was it long before I had good cause to believe that my father's new wife was perfectly well acquainted with the good opinion I had of her, not only from her usage of me, but from certain hints which she threw forth with an air of triumph. One day, particularly, I remember she said to my father, upon his mentioning his age, 'O, my dear! I hope you have many years yet to live! unless, indeed, I should be so cruel as to break your heart.' She spoke these words looking me full in the face, and accompanied them with a sneer in which the highest malice was visible, under a thin covering of affected pleasantry.

Digitized by Google

"I will not entertain you, madam, with anything so common as the cruel usage of a step-mother; nor of what affected me much more, the unkind behaviour of a father under such an influence. It shall suffice only to tell you that I had the mortification to perceive the gradual and daily decrease of my father's affection. His smiles were converted into frowns; the tender appellations of child and dear were exchanged for plain Molly, that girl, that creature, and sometimes much harder names. I was at first turned all at once into a cypher, and at last seemed to be considered as a nuisance in the family.

"Thus altered was the man of whom I gave you such a character at the entrance on my story; but, alas! he no longer acted from his own excellent disposition, but was in everything governed and directed by my mother-in-law. In fact, whenever there is great disparity of years between husband and wife, the younger is, I believe, always possessed of absolute power over the elder; for superstition itself is a less firm support of absolute power than dotage.

"But, though his wife was so entirely mistress of my father's will that she could make him use me ill, she could not so perfectly subdue his understanding as to prevent him from being conscious of such ill-usage; and from this consciousness, he began inveterately to hate me. Of this hatred he gave me numberless instances, and I protest to you I know not any other reason for it than what I have assigned; and the cause, as experience hath convinced me, is adequate to the effect.

"While I was in this wretched situation, my

Digitized by Google

father's unkindness having almost broken my heart, he came one day into my room with more anger in his countenance than I had ever seen, and, after bitterly upbraiding me with my undutiful behaviour both to himself and his worthy consort, he bid me pack up my alls, and immediately prepare to quit his house; at the same time gave me a letter, and told me that would acquaint me where I might find a home; adding that he doubted not but I expected, and had indeed solicited, the invitation; and left me with a declaration that he would have no spies in his family.

"The letter, I found on opening it, was from my father's own sister; but before I mention the contents I will give you a short sketch of her character, as it was somewhat particular. Her personal charms were not great; for she was very tall, very thin, and very homely. Of the defect of her beauty she was, perhaps, sensible; her vanity, therefore, retreated into her mind, where there is no looking-glass, and consequently where we can flatter ourselves with discovering almost whatever beauties we please. This is an encouraging circumstance; and yet I have observed, dear Mrs. Booth, that few women ever seek these comforts from within till they are driven to it by despair of finding any food for their vanity from without. Indeed, I believe the first wish of our whole sex is to be handsome."

Here both the ladies fixed their eyes on the glass, and both smiled.

"My aunt, however," continued Mrs. Bennet, "from despair of gaining any applause this way,

Digitized by Google

had applied herself entirely to the contemplation of her understanding, and had improved this to such a pitch, that at the age of fifty, at which she was now arrived, she had contracted a hearty contempt for much the greater part of both sexes; for the women, as being idiots, and for the men, as the admirers of idiots. That word, and fool, were almost constantly in her mouth, and were bestowed with great liberality among all her acquaintance.

"This lady had spent one day only at my father's house in near two years; it was about a month before his second marriage. At her departure she took occasion to whisper me her opinion of the widow, whom she called a pretty idiot, and wondered how her brother could bear such company under his roof; for neither she nor I had at that time any suspicion of what afterwards happened.

"The letter which my father had just received, and which was the first she had sent him since his marriage, was of such a nature that I should be unjust if I blamed him for being offended; fool and idiot were both plentifully bestowed in it as well on himself as on his wife. But what, perhaps, had principally offended him was that part which related to me; for, after much panegyric on my understanding, and saying he was unworthy of such a daughter, she considered his match not only as the highest indiscretion as it related to himself, but as a downright act of injustice to me. One expression in it I shall never forget. 'You have placed,' said she, 'a woman above your daughter, who, in understanding, the only valuable gift of nature, is the lowest in the whole

Digitized by Google

class of pretty idiots.' After much more of this kind, it concluded with inviting me to her house.

"I can truly say that when I had read the letter I entirely forgave my father's suspicion that I had made some complaints to my aunt of his behaviour; for, though I was indeed innocent, there was surely colour enough to suspect the contrary.

"Though I had never been greatly attached to my aunt, nor indeed had she formerly given me any reason for such an attachment, yet I was well enough pleased with her present invitation. To say the truth, I led so wretched a life where I then was, that it was impossible not to be a gainer by any exchange.

"I could not, however, bear the thoughts of leaving my father with an impression on his mind against me which I did not deserve. I endeavoured, therefore, to remove all his suspicion of my having complained to my aunt by the most earnest asseverations of my innocence; but they were all to no purpose. All my tears, all my vows, and all my entreaties were fruitless. My new mother, indeed, appeared to be my advocate; but she acted her part very poorly, and, far from counterfeiting any desire of succeeding in my suit, she could not conceal the excessive joy which she felt on the occasion.

"Well, madam, the next day I departed for my aunt's, where, after a long journey of forty miles, I arrived, without having once broke my fast on the road; for grief is as capable as food of filling the stomach, and I had too much of the former to admit any of the latter. The fatigue of my journey, and

Digitized by Google

the agitation of my mind, joined to my fasting, so overpowered my spirits, that when I was taken from my horse I immediately fainted away in the arms of the man who helped me from my saddle. My aunt expressed great astonishment at seeing me in this condition, with my eyes almost swollen out of my head with tears; but my father's letter, which I delivered her soon after I came to myself, pretty well, I believe, cured her surprize. She often smiled with a mixture of contempt and anger while she was reading it; and, having pronounced her brother to be a fool, she turned to me, and, with as much affability as possible (for she is no great mistress of affability), said, 'Don't be uneasy, dear Molly, for you are come to the house of a friend — of one who hath sense enough to discern the author of all the mischief: depend upon it, child, I will, ere long, make some people ashamed of their folly.' This kind reception gave me some comfort, my aunt assuring me that she would convince him how unjustly he had accused me of having made any complaints to her. A paper war was now begun between these two, which not only fixed an irreconcileable hatred between them, but confirmed my father's displeasure against me; and, in the end, I believe, did me no service with my aunt; for I was considered by both as the cause of their dissension, though, in fact, my stepmother, who very well knew the affection my aunt had for her, had long since done her business with my father; and as for my aunt's affection towards him, it had been abating several years, from an apprehension that he did not pay sufficient deference to her understanding.

Digitized by Google

"I had lived about half a year with my aunt when I heard of my stepmother's being delivered of a boy, and the great joy my father expressed on that occasion; but, poor man, he lived not long to enjoy his happiness; for within a month afterwards I had the melancholy news of his death.

"Notwithstanding all the disobligations I had lately received from him, I was sincerely afflicted at my loss of him. All his kindness to me in my infancy, all his kindness to me while I was growing up, recurred to my memory, raised a thousand tender, melancholy ideas, and totally obliterated all thoughts of his latter behaviour, for which I made also every allowance and every excuse in my power.

"But what may perhaps appear more extraordinary, my aunt began soon to speak of him with concern. She said he had some understanding formerly, though his passion for that vile woman had, in a great measure, obscured it; and one day, when she was in an ill-humour with me, she had the cruelty to throw out a hint that she had never quarrelled with her brother if it had not been on my account.

"My father, during his life, had allowed my aunt very handsomely for my board; for generosity was too deeply riveted in his nature to be plucked out by all the power of his wife. So far, however, she prevailed, that, though he died possessed of upwards of £2000, he left me no more than £100, which, as he expressed in his will, was to set me up in some business, if I had the grace to take to any.

"Hitherto my aunt had in general treated me with some degree of affection; but her behaviour

Digitized by Google

began now to be changed. She soon took an opportunity of giving me to understand that her fortune was insufficient to keep me; and, as I could not live on the interest of my own, it was high time for me to consider about going into the world. She added, that her brother having mentioned my setting up in some business in his will was very foolish; that I had been bred to nothing; and, besides, that the sum was too trifling to set me up in any way of reputation; she desired me therefore to think of immediately going into service.

"This advice was perhaps right enough; and I told her I was very ready to do as she directed me, but I was at that time in an ill state of health; I desired her therefore to let me stay with her till my legacy, which was not to be paid till a year after my father's death, was due; and I then promised to satisfy her for my board, to which she readily consented.

"And now, madam," said Mrs. Bennet, sighing, "I am going to open to you those matters which lead directly to that great catastrophe of my life which hath occasioned my giving you this trouble, and of trying your patience in this manner."

Amelia, notwithstanding her impatience, made a very civil answer to this; and then Mrs. Bennet proceeded to relate what is written in the next chapter.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER FOUR

FURTHER CONTINUATION.

THE curate of the parish where my aunt dwelt was a young fellow of about four-and-twenty. He had been left an orphan in his infancy, and entirely unprovided for, when an uncle had the goodness to take care of his education, both at school and at the university. As the young gentleman was intended for the church, his uncle, though he had two daughters of his own, and no very large fortune, purchased for him the next presentation of a living of near £200 a-year. The incumbent, at the time of the purchase, was under the age of sixty, and in apparent good health; notwithstanding which, he died soon after the bargain, and long before the nephew was capable of orders; so that the uncle was obliged to give the living to a clergyman, to hold it till the young man came of proper age.

"The young gentleman had not attained his proper age of taking orders when he had the misfortune to lose his uncle and only friend, who, thinking he had sufficiently provided for his nephew by the purchase of the living, considered him no farther in his will, but divided all the fortune of which he died possessed between his two daughters; recommending it to

Digitized by Google

them, however, on his deathbed, to assist their cousin with money sufficient to keep him at the university till he should be capable of ordination.

"But, as no appointment of this kind was in the will, the young ladies, who received about £2000 each, thought proper to disregard the last words of their father; for, besides that both of them were extremely tenacious of their money, they were great enemies to their cousin, on account of their father's kindness to him; and thought proper to let him know that they thought he had robbed them of too much already.

"The poor young fellow was now greatly distrest; for he had yet above a year to stay at the university, without any visible means of sustaining himself there.

"In this distress, however, he met with a friend, who had the good nature to lend him the sum of twenty pounds, for which he only accepted his bond for forty, and which was to be paid within a year after his being possessed of his living; that is, within a year after his becoming qualified to hold it.

"With this small sum thus hardly obtained the poor gentleman made a shift to struggle with all difficulties till he became of due age to take upon himself the character of a deacon. He then repaired to that clergyman to whom his uncle had given the living upon the conditions above mentioned, to procure a title to ordination; but this, to his great surprize and mortification, was absolutely refused him.

"The immediate disappointment did not hurt

Digitized by Google

him so much as the conclusion he drew from it; for he could have but little hopes that the man who could have the cruelty to refuse him a title would vouchsafe afterwards to deliver up to him a living of so considerable a value; nor was it long before this worthy incumbent told him plainly that he valued his uncle's favours at too high a rate to part with them to any one; nay, he pretended scruples of conscience, and said that, if he had made any slight promises, which he did not now well remember, they were wicked and void; that he looked upon himself as married to his parish, and he could no more give it up than he could give up his wife without sin.

"The poor young fellow was now obliged to seek farther for a title, which, at length, he obtained from the rector of the parish where my aunt lived.

"He had not long been settled in the curacy before an intimate acquaintance grew between him and my aunt; for she was a great admirer of the clergy, and used frequently to say they were the only conversible creatures in the country.

"The first time she was in this gentleman's company was at a neighbour's christening, where she stood godmother. Here she displayed her whole little stock of knowledge, in order to captivate Mr. Bennet (I suppose, madam, you already guess that to have been his name), and before they parted gave him a very strong invitation to her house.

"Not a word passed at this christening between Mr. Bennet and myself, but our eyes were not unemployed. Here, madam, I first felt a pleasing kind

Digitized by Google

of confusion, which I know not how to describe. I felt a kind of uneasiness, yet did not wish to be without it. I longed to be alone, yet dreaded the hour of parting. I could not keep my eyes off from the object which caused my confusion, and which I was at once afraid of and enamoured with. But why do I attempt to describe my situation to one who must, I am sure, have felt the same?"

Amelia smiled, and Mrs. Bennet went on thus: "O, Mrs. Booth! had you seen the person of whom I am now speaking, you would not condemn the suddenness of my love. Nay, indeed, I had seen him there before, though this was the first time I had ever heard the music of his voice. Oh! it was the sweetest that was ever heard.

"Mr. Bennet came to visit my aunt the very next day. She imputed this respectful haste to the powerful charms of her understanding, and resolved to lose no opportunity in improving the opinion which she imagined he had conceived of her. She became by this desire quite ridiculous, and ran into absurdities and a gallimatia scarce credible.

"Mr. Bennet, as I afterwards found, saw her in the same light with myself; but, as he was a very sensible and well-bred man, he so well concealed his opinion from us both, that I was almost angry, and she was pleased even to raptures, declaring herself charmed with his understanding, though, indeed, he had said very little; but I believe he heard himself into her good opinion, while he gazed himself into love.

"The two first visits which Mr. Bennet made to

Digitized by Google

my aunt, though I was in the room all the time, I never spoke a word; but on the third, on some argument which arose between them, Mr. Bennet referred himself to me. I took his side of the question, as indeed I must to have done justice, and repeated two or three words of Latin. My aunt reddened at this, and exprest great disdain of my opinion, declaring she was astonished that a man of Mr. Bennet's understanding could appeal to the judgment of a silly girl; 'Is she,' said my aunt, bridling herself, 'fit to decide between us?' Mr. Bennet spoke very favourably of what I had said; upon which my aunt burst almost into a rage, treated me with downright scurrility, called me conceited fool, abused my poor father for having taught me Latin, which, she said, had made me a downright coxcomb, and made me prefer myself to those who were a hundred times my superiors in knowledge. She then fell foul on the learned languages, declared they were totally useless, and concluded that she had read all that was worth reading, though, she thanked heaven, she understood no language but her own.

"Before the end of this visit Mr. Bennet reconciled himself very well to my aunt, which, indeed, was no difficult task for him to accomplish; but from that hour she conceived a hatred and rancour towards me which I could never appease.

"My aunt had, from my first coming into her house, expressed great dislike to my learning. In plain truth, she envied me that advantage. This envy I had long ago discovered, and had taken great

Digitized by Google

pains to smother it, carefully avoiding ever to mention a Latin word in her presence, and always submitting to her authority; for indeed I despised her ignorance too much to dispute with her. By these means I had pretty well succeeded, and we lived tolerably together; but the affront paid to her understanding by Mr. Bennet in my favour was an injury never to be forgiven to me. She took me severely to task that very evening, and reminded me of going to service in such earnest terms as almost amounted to literally turning me out of doors; advising me, in the most insulting manner, to keep my Latin to myself, which she said was useless to any one, but ridiculous when pretended to by a servant.

"The next visit Mr. Bennet made at our house I was not suffered to be present. This was much the shortest of all his visits; and when he went away he left my aunt in a worse humour than ever I had seen her. The whole was discharged on me in the usual manner, by upbraiding me with my learning, conceit, and poverty; reminding me of obligations, and insisting on my going immediately to service. With all this I was greatly pleased, as it assured me that Mr. Bennet had said something to her in my favour; and I would have purchased a kind expression of his at almost any price.

"I should scarce, however, have been so sanguine as to draw this conclusion, had I not received some hints that I had not unhappily placed my affections on a man who made me no return; for, though he had scarce addressed a dozen sentences to me

Digitized by Google

(for, indeed, he had no opportunity), yet his eyes had revealed certain secrets to mine with which I was not displeased.

"I remained, however, in a state of anxiety near a month; sometimes pleasing myself with thinking Mr. Bennet's heart was in the same situation with my own; sometimes doubting that my wishes had flattered and deceived me, and not in the least questioning that my aunt was my rival; for I thought no woman could be proof against the charms that had subdued me. Indeed, Mrs. Booth, he was a charming young fellow; I must — I must pay this tribute to his memory. O, gracious Heaven! why, why did I ever see him? why was I doomed to such misery?" Here she burst into a flood of tears, and remained incapable of speech for some time; during which the gentle Amelia endeavoured all she could to soothe her, and gave sufficient marks of sympathizing in the tender affliction of her friend.

Mrs. Bennet, at length, recovered her spirits, and proceeded, as in the next chapter.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER FIVE

THE STORY OF MRS. BENNET CONTINUED.

I SCARCE know where I left off — Oh! I was, I think, telling you that I esteemed my aunt as my rival; and it is not easy to conceive a greater degree of detestation than I had for her; and what may, perhaps, appear strange, as she daily grew more and more civil to me, my hatred encreased with her civility; for I imputed it all to her triumph over me, and to her having secured, beyond all apprehension, the heart I longed for.

"How was I surprized when, one day, with as much good-humour as she was mistress of (for her countenance was not very pleasing), she asked me how I liked Mr. Bennet? The question, you will believe, madam, threw me into great confusion, which she plainly perceived, and, without waiting for my answer, told me she was very well satisfied, for that it did not require her discernment to read my thoughts in my countenance. 'Well, child,' she said, 'I have suspected this a great while, and I believe it will please you to know that I yesterday made the same discovery in your lover.' This, I confess to you, was more than I could well bear, and I begged her to say no more to me at that time on that subject. 'Nay, child,' answered she, 'I must

Digitized by Google

tell you all, or I should not act a friendly part. Mr. Bennet, I am convinced, hath a passion for you; but it is a passion which, I think, you should not encourage. For, to be plain with you, I fear he is in love with your person only. Now this is a love, child, which cannot produce that rational happiness which a woman of sense ought to expect.' In short, she ran on with a great deal of stuff about rational happiness, and women of sense, and concluded with assuring me that, after the strictest scrutiny, she could not find that Mr. Bennet had an adequate opinion of my understanding; upon which she vouchsafed to make me many compliments, but mixed with several sarcasms concerning my learning.

"I hope, madam, however," said she to Amelia, "you have not so bad an opinion of my capacity as to imagine me dull enough to be offended with Mr. Bennet's sentiments, for which I presently knew so well to account. I was, indeed, charmed with his ingenuity, who had discovered, perhaps, the only way of reconciling my aunt to those inclinations which I now assured myself he had for me.

"I was not long left to support my hopes by my sagacity. He soon found an opportunity of declaring his passion. He did this in so forcible though gentle a manner, with such a profusion of fervency and tenderness at once, that his love, like a torrent, bore everything before it; and I am almost ashamed to own to you how very soon he prevailed upon me to— to— in short, to be an honest woman, and to confess to him the plain truth.

"When we were upon a good footing together he

Digitized by Google

gave me a long relation of what had past at several interviews with my aunt, at which I had not been present. He said he had discovered that, as she valued herself chiefly on her understanding, so she was extremely jealous of mine, and hated me on account of my learning. That, as he had loved me passionately from his first seeing me, and had thought of nothing from that time but of throwing himself at my feet, he saw no way so open to propitiate my aunt as that which he had taken by commending my beauty, a perfection to which she had long resigned all claim, at the expense of my understanding, in which he lamented my deficiency to a degree almost of ridicule. This he imputed chiefly to my learning; on this occasion he advanced a sentiment which so pleased my aunt that she thought proper to make it her own; for I heard it afterwards more than once from her own mouth. Learning, he said, had the same effect on the mind that strong liquors have on the constitution; both tending to eradicate all our natural fire and energy. His flattery had made such a dupe of my aunt that she assented, without the least suspicion of his sincerity, to all he said; so sure is vanity to weaken every fortress of the understanding, and to betray us to every attack of the enemy.

"You will believe, madam, that I readily forgave him all he had said, not only from that motive which I have mentioned, but as I was assured he had spoke the reverse of his real sentiments. I was not, however, quite so well pleased with my aunt, who began to treat me as if I was really an idiot. Her contempt, I own, a little piqued me; and I could not help

Digitized by Google

often expressing my resentment, when we were alone together, to Mr. Bennet, who never failed to gratify me by making her conceit the subject of his wit; a talent which he possessed in the most extraordinary degree.

"This proved of very fatal consequence; for one day, while we were enjoying my aunt in a very thick arbour in the garden, she stole upon us unobserved, and overheard our whole conversation. I wish, my dear, you understood Latin, that I might repeat you a sentence in which the rage of a tigress that hath lost her young is described. No English poet, as I remember, hath come up to it; nor am I myself equal to the undertaking. She burst in upon us, open-mouthed, and after discharging every abusive word almost, in the only language she understood, on poor Mr. Bennet, turned us both out of doors, declaring she would send my rags after me, but would never more permit me to set my foot within her threshold.

"Consider, dear madam, to what a wretched condition we were now reduced. I had not yet received the small legacy left me by my father; nor was Mr. Bennet master of five pounds in the whole world.

"In this situation, the man I doated on to distraction had but little difficulty to persuade me to a proposal which, indeed, I thought generous in him to make, as it seemed to proceed from that tenderness for my reputation to which he ascribed it; indeed, it could proceed from no motive with which I should have been displeased. In a word, within two days we were man and wife.

Digitized by Google.

"Mr. Bennet now declared himself the happiest of men; and, for my part, I sincerely declared I envied no woman upon earth. How little, alas! did I then know or suspect the price I was to pay for all my joys! A match of real love is, indeed, truly paradise; and such perfect happiness seems to be the forbidden fruit to mortals, which we are to lament having tasted during the rest of our lives.

"The first uneasiness which attacked us after our marriage was on my aunt's account. It was very disagreeable to live under the nose of so near a relation, who did not acknowledge us, but on the contrary, was ever doing us all the ill turns in her power, and making a party against us in the parish, which is always easy enough to do amongst the vulgar against persons who are their superiors in rank, and, at the same time, their inferiors in fortune. This made Mr. Bennet think of procuring an exchange, in which intention he was soon after confirmed by the arrival of the rector. It was the rector's custom to spend three months every year at his living, for which purpose he reserved an apartment in his parsonage-house, which was full large enough for two such little families as then occupied it. We at first promised ourselves some little convenience from his boarding with us; and Mr. Bennet began to lay aside his thoughts of leaving his curacy, at least for some time. But these golden ideas presently vanished; for, though we both used our utmost endeavours to please him, we soon found the impossibility of succeeding. He was, indeed, to give you his character in a word, the

Digitized by Google

most peevish of mortals. This temper, notwithstanding that he was both a good and a pious man, made his company so insufferable that nothing could compensate it. If his breakfast was not ready to a moment — if a dish of meat was too much or too little done — in short, if anything failed of exactly hitting his taste, he was sure to be out of humour all that day, so that, indeed, he was scarce ever in a good temper a whole day together; for fortune seems to take a delight in thwarting this kind of disposition, to which human life, with its many crosses and accidents, is, in truth, by no means fitted.

"Mr. Bennet was now, by my desire as well as his own, determined to quit the parish; but when he attempted to get an exchange, he found it a matter of more difficulty than he had apprehended; for the rector's temper was so well known among the neighbouring clergy, that none of them could be brought to think of spending three months in a year with him.

"After many fruitless enquiries, Mr. Bennet thought best to remove to London, the great mart of all affairs, ecclesiastical and civil. This project greatly pleased him, and he resolved, without more delay, to take his leave of the rector, which he did in the most friendly manner possible, and preached his farewell sermon; nor was there a dry eye in the church, except among the few, whom my aunt, who remained still inexorable, had prevailed upon to hate us without any cause.

"To London we came, and took up our lodging the first night at the inn where the stage-coach set

Digitized by Google

us down; the next morning my husband went out early on his business, and returned with the good news of having heard of a curacy, and of having equipped himself with a lodging in the neighbourhood of a worthy peer, 'who,' said he, 'was my fellow-collegiate; and, what is more, I have a direction to a person who will advance your legacy at a very reasonable rate.'

"This last particular was extremely agreeable to me, for our last guinea was now broached; and the rector had lent my husband ten pounds to pay his debts in the country, for, with all his peevishness, he was a good and a generous man, and had, indeed, so many valuable qualities, that I lamented his temper, after I knew him thoroughly, as much on his account as on my own.

"We now quitted the inn and went to our lodgings, where my husband having placed me in safety, as he said, he went about the business of the legacy with good assurance of success.

"My husband returned elated with his success, the person to whom he applied having undertaken to advance the legacy, which he fulfilled as soon as the proper enquiries could be made, and proper instruments prepared for that purpose.

"This, however, took up so much time, that, as our fund was so very low, we were reduced to some distress, and obliged to live extremely penurious; nor would all do without my taking a most disagreeable way of procuring money by pawning one of my gowns.

"Mr. Bennet was now settled in a curacy in town,

Digitized by Google

greatly to his satisfaction, and our affairs seemed to have a prosperous aspect, when he came home to me one morning in much apparent disorder, looking as pale as death, and begged me by some means or other to get him a dram, for that he was taken with a sudden faintness and lowness of spirits.

"Frighted as I was, I immediately ran down-stairs, and procured some rum of the mistress of the house; the first time, indeed, I ever knew him drink any. When he came to himself he begged me not to be alarmed, for it was no distemper, but something that had vexed him, which had caused his disorder, which he had now perfectly recovered.

"He then told me the whole affair. He had hitherto deferred paying a visit to the lord whom I mentioned to have been formerly his fellow-collegiate, and was now his neighbour, till he could put himself in decent rigging. He had now purchased a new cassock, hat, and wig, and went to pay his respects to his old acquaintance, who had received from him many civilities and assistances in his learning at the university, and had promised to return them four-fold hereafter.

"It was not without some difficulty that Mr. Bennet got into the antechamber. Here he waited, or as the phrase is, cooled his heels, for above an hour before he saw his lordship; nor had he seen him then but by an accident; for my lord was going out when he casually intercepted him in his passage to his chariot. He approached to salute him with some familiarity, though with respect, depending on his former intimacy, when my lord, stepping short,

Digitized by Google

very gravely told him he had not the pleasure of knowing him. How! my lord, said he, can you have so soon forgot your old acquaintance Tom Bennet? O, Mr. Bennet! cries his lordship, with much reserve, is it you? you will pardon my memory. I am glad to see you, Mr. Bennet, but you must excuse me at present, for I am in very great haste. He then broke from him, and without more ceremony, or any further invitation, went directly into his chariot.

"This cold reception from a person for whom my husband had a real friendship, and from whom he had great reason to expect a very warm return of affection, so affected the poor man, that it caused all those symptoms which I have mentioned before.

"Though this incident produced no material consequence, I could not pass it over in silence, as, of all the misfortunes which ever befel him, it affected my husband the most. I need not, however, to a woman of your delicacy, make any comments on a behaviour which, though I believe it is very common, is, nevertheless, cruel and base beyond description, and is diametrically opposite to true honour as well as to goodness.

"To relieve the uneasiness which my husband felt on account of his false friend, I prevailed with him to go every night, almost for a fortnight together, to the play; a diversion of which he was greatly fond, and from which he did not think his being a clergyman excluded him; indeed, it is very well if those austere persons who would be inclined to censure him on this head have themselves no greater sins to answer for.

Digitized by Google

"From this time, during three months, we past our time very agreeably, a little too agreeably perhaps for our circumstances; for, however innocent diversions may be in other respects, they must be owned to be expensive. When you consider then, madam, that our income from the curacy was less than forty pounds a year, and that, after payment of the debt to the rector, and another to my aunt, with the costs in law which she had occasioned by suing for it, my legacy was reduced to less than seventy pounds, you will not wonder that, in diversions, cloaths, and the common expenses of life, we had almost consumed our whole stock.

"The inconsiderate manner in which we had lived for some time will, I doubt not, appear to you to want some excuse; but I have none to make for it. Two things, however, now happened, which occasioned much serious reflexion to Mr. Bennet; the one was, that I grew near my time; the other, that he now received a letter from Oxford, demanding the debt of forty pounds which I mentioned to you before. The former of these he made a pretence of obtaining a delay for the payment of the latter, promising, in two months, to pay off half the debt, by which means he obtained a forbearance during that time.

"I was now delivered of a son, a matter which should in reality have encreased our concern, but, on the contrary, it gave us great pleasure; greater indeed could not have been conceived at the birth of an heir to the most plentiful estate: so entirely thoughtless were we, and so little forecast had we of those many evils and distresses to which we had rendered a human

Digitized by Google

creature, and one so dear to us, liable. The day of a christening is, in all families, I believe, a day of jubilee and rejoicing; and yet, if we consider the interest of that little wretch who is the occasion, how very little reason would the most sanguine persons have for their joy!

"But, though our eyes were too weak to look forward, for the sake of our child, we could not be blinded to those dangers that immediately threatened ourselves. Mr. Bennet, at the expiration of the two months, received a second letter from Oxford, in a very peremptory stile, and threatening a suit without any farther delay. This alarmed us in the strongest manner; and my husband, to secure his liberty, was advised for a while to shelter himself in the verge of the court.

"And, now, madam, I am entering on that scene which directly leads to all my misery."—Here she stopped, and wiped her eyes; and then, begging Amelia to excuse her for a few minutes, ran hastily out of the room, leaving Amelia by herself, while she refreshed her spirits with a cordial to enable her to relate what follows in the next chapter.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER SIX

FARTHER CONTINUED.

MRS. BENNET, returning into the room, made a short apology for her absence, and then proceeded in these words:

"We now left our lodging, and took a second floor in that very house where you now are, to which we were recommended by the woman where we had before lodged, for the mistresses of both houses were acquainted; and, indeed, we had been all at the play together. To this new lodging then (such was our wretched destiny) we immediately repaired, and were received by Mrs. Ellison (how can I bear the sound of that detested name?) with much civility; she took care, however, during the first fortnight of our residence, to wait upon us every Monday morning for her rent; such being, it seems, the custom of this place, which, as it was inhabited chiefly by persons in debt, is not the region of credit.

"My husband, by the singular goodness of the rector, who greatly compassionated his case, was enabled to continue in his curacy, though he could only do the duty on Sundays. He was, however, sometimes obliged to furnish a person to officiate at his expence; so that our income was very scanty, and the poor little remainder of the legacy being almost spent, we

Digitized by Google

were reduced to some difficulties, and, what was worse, saw still a prospect of greater before our eyes.

"Under these circumstances, how agreeable to poor Mr. Bennet must have been the behaviour of Mrs. Ellison, who, when he carried her her rent on the usual day, told him, with a benevolent smile, that he needed not to give himself the trouble of such exact punctuality. She added that, if it was at any time inconvenient to him, he might pay her when he pleased. 'To say the truth,' says she, 'I never was so much pleased with any lodgers in my life; I am convinced, Mr. Bennet, you are a very worthy man, and you are a very happy one too; for you have the prettiest wife and the prettiest child I ever saw.' These, dear madam, were the words she was pleased to make use of: and I am sure she behaved to me with such an appearance of friendship and affection, that, as I could not perceive any possible views of interest which she could have in her professions, I easily believed them real.

"There lodged in the same house — O, Mrs. Booth! the blood runs cold to my heart, and should run cold to yours, when I name him — there lodged in the same house a lord — the lord, indeed, whom I have since seen in your company. This lord, Mrs. Ellison told me, had taken a great fancy to my little Charley. Fool that I was, and blinded by my own passion, which made me conceive that an infant, not three months old, could be really the object of affection to any besides a parent, and more especially to a gay young fellow! But, if I was silly in being deceived, how wicked was the wretch who deceived me — who

Digitized by Google

used such art, and employed such pains, such incredible pains, to deceive me! He acted the part of a nurse to my little infant; he danced it, he lulled it, he kissed it; declared it was the very picture of a nephew of his— his favourite sister's child; and said so many kind and fond things of its beauty, that I myself, though, I believe, one of the tenderest and fondest of mothers, scarce carried my own ideas of my little darling's perfection beyond the compliments which he paid it.

"My lord, however, perhaps from modesty, before my face, fell far short of what Mrs. Ellison reported from him. And now, when she found the impression which was made on me by these means, she took every opportunity of insinuating to me his lordship's many virtues, his great goodness to his sister's children in particular; nor did she fail to drop some hints which gave me the most simple and groundless hopes of strange consequences from his fondness to my Charley.

"When, by these means, which, simple as they may appear, were, perhaps, the most artful, my lord had gained something more, I think, than my esteem, he took the surest method to confirm himself in my affection. This was, by professing the highest friendship for my husband; for, as to myself, I do assure you he never shewed me more than common respect; and I hope you will believe I should have immediately startled and flown off if he had. Poor I accounted for all the friendship which he expressed for my husband, and all the fondness which he shewed to my boy, from the great prettiness of the one and the great merit of the other; foolishly conceiving

Digitized by Google

that others saw with my eyes and felt with my heart. Little did I dream that my own unfortunate person was the fountain of all this lord's goodness, and was the intended price of it.

"One evening, as I was drinking tea with Mrs. Ellison by my lord's fire (a liberty which she never scrupled taking when he was gone out), my little Charley, now about half a year old, sitting in her lap, my lord — accidentally, no doubt, indeed I then thought it so — came in. I was confounded, and offered to go; but my lord declared, if he disturbed Mrs. Ellison's company, as he phrased it, he would himself leave the room. When I was thus prevailed on to keep my seat, my lord immediately took my little baby into his lap, and gave it some tea there, not a little at the expense of his embroidery; for he was very richly drest; indeed, he was as fine a figure as perhaps ever was seen. His behaviour on this occasion gave me many ideas in his favour. I thought he discovered good sense, good nature, condescension, and other good qualities, by the fondness he shewed to my child, and the contempt he seemed to express for his finery, which so greatly became him; for I cannot deny but that he was the handsomest and genteelest person in the world, though such considerations advanced him not a step in my favour.

"My husband now returned from church (for this happened on a Sunday), and was, by my lord's particular desire, ushered into the room. My lord received him with the utmost politeness, and with many professions of esteem, which, he said, he had

Digitized by Google

conceived from Mrs. Ellison's representations of his merit. He then proceeded to mention the living which was detained from my husband, of which Mrs. Ellison had likewise informed him; and said, he thought it would be no difficult matter to obtain a restoration of it by the authority of the bishop, who was his particular friend, and to whom he would take an immediate opportunity of mentioning it. This, at last, he determined to do the very next day, when he invited us both to dinner, where we were to be acquainted with his lordship's success.

"My lord now insisted on my husband's staying supper with him, without taking any notice of me; but Mrs. Ellison declared he should not part man and wife, and that she herself would stay with me. The motion was too agreeable to me to be rejected; and, except the little time I retired to put my child to bed, we spent together the most agreeable evening imaginable; nor was it, I believe, easy to decide whether Mr. Bennet or myself were most delighted with his lordship and Mrs. Ellison; but this, I assure you, the generosity of the one, and the extreme civility and kindness of the other, were the subjects of our conversation all the ensuing night, during which we neither of us closed our eyes.

"The next day at dinner my lord acquainted us that he had prevailed with the bishop to write to the clergyman in the country; indeed, he told us that he had engaged the bishop to be very warm in our interest, and had not the least doubt of success. This threw us both into a flow of spirits; and in the afternoon Mr. Bennet, at Mrs. Ellison's request,

Digitized by Google

which was seconded by his lordship, related the history of our lives from our first acquaintance. My lord seemed much affected with some tender scenes, which, as no man could better feel, so none could better describe, than my husband. When he had finished, my lord begged pardon for mentioning an occurrence which gave him such a particular concern, as it had disturbed that delicious state of happiness in which we had lived at our former lodging. 'It would be ungenerous,' said he, 'to rejoice at an accident which, though it brought me fortunately acquainted with two of the most agreeable people in the world, was yet at the expense of your mutual felicity. The circumstance, I mean, is your debt at Oxford; pray, how doth that stand? I am resolved it shall never disturb your happiness hereafter.' At these words the tears burst from my poor husband's eyes; and, in an ecstasy of gratitude, he cried out, 'Your lordship overcomes me with generosity. If you go on in this manner, both my wife's gratitude and mine must be bankrupt.' He then acquainted my lord with the exact state of the case, and received assurances from him that the debt should never trouble him. My husband was again breaking out into the warmest expressions of gratitude, but my lord stopt him short, saying, 'If you have any obligation, it is to my little Charley here, from whose little innocent smiles I have received more than the value of this trifling debt in pleasure.' I forgot to tell you that, when I offered to leave the room after dinner upon my child's account, my lord would not suffer me, but ordered the child to be

Digitized by Google

brought to me. He now took it out of my arms, placed it upon his own knee, and fed it with some fruit from the dessert. In short, it would be more tedious to you than to myself to relate the thousand little tendernesses he shewed to the child. He gave it many baubles; amongst the rest was a coral worth at least three pounds; and, when my husband was confined near a fortnight to his chamber with a cold, he visited the child every day (for to this infant's account were all the visits placed), and seldom failed of accompanying his visit with a present to the little thing.

"Here, Mrs. Booth, I cannot help mentioning a doubt which hath often arisen in my mind since I have been enough mistress of myself to reflect on this horrid train which was laid to blow up my innocence. Wicked and barbarous it was to the highest degree without any question; but my doubt is, whether the art or folly of it be the more conspicuous; for, however delicate and refined the art must be allowed to have been, the folly, I think, must upon a fair examination appear no less astonishing: for to lay all considerations of cruelty and crime out of the case, what a foolish bargain doth the man make for himself who purchases so poor a pleasure at so high a price!

"We had lived near three weeks with as much freedom as if we had been all of the same family, when, one afternoon, my lord proposed to my husband to ride down himself to solicit the surrender; for he said the bishop had received an unsatisfactory answer from the parson, and had writ a second letter

Digitized by Google

more pressing, which his lordship now promised us to strengthen by one of his own that my husband was to carry with him. Mr. Bennet agreed to this proposal with great thankfulness, and the next day was appointed for his journey. The distance was near seventy miles.

"My husband set out on his journey, and he had scarce left me before Mrs. Ellison came into my room, and endeavoured to comfort me in his absence; to say the truth, though he was to be from me but a few days, and the purpose of his going was to fix our happiness on a sound foundation for all our future days, I could scarce support my spirits under this first separation. But though I then thought Mrs. Ellison's intentions to be most kind and friendly, yet the means she used were utterly ineffectual, and appeared to me injudicious. Instead of soothing my uneasiness, which is always the first physic to be given to grief, she rallied me upon it, and began to talk in a very unusual stile of gaiety, in which she treated conjugal love with much ridicule.

"I gave her to understand that she displeased me by this discourse; but she soon found means to give such a turn to it as made a merit of all she had said. And now, when she had worked me into a good humour, she made a proposal to me which I at first rejected — but at last fatally, too fatally, suffered myself to be over-persuaded. This was to go to a masquerade at Ranelagh, for which my lord had furnished her with tickets."

At these words Amelia turned pale as death, and hastily begged her friend to give her a glass of

Digitized by Google

water, some air, or anything. Mrs. Bennet, having thrown open the window, and procured the water, which prevented Amelia from fainting, looked at her with much tenderness, and cried, "I do not wonder, my dear madam, that you are affected with my mentioning that fatal masquerade; since I firmly believe the same ruin was intended for you at the same place; the apprehension of which occasioned the letter I sent you this morning, and all the trial of your patience which I have made since."

Amelia gave her a tender embrace, with many expressions of the warmest gratitude; assured her she had pretty well recovered her spirits, and begged her to continue her story, which Mrs. Bennet then did. However, as our readers may likewise be glad to recover their spirits also, we shall here put an end to this chapter.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE STORY FARTHER CONTINUED.

MRS. BENNET proceeded thus:

"I was at length prevailed on to accompany Mrs. Ellison to the masquerade. Here, I must confess, the pleasantness of the place, the variety of the dresses, and the novelty of the thing, gave me much delight, and raised my fancy to the highest pitch. As I was entirely void of all suspicion, my mind threw off all reserve, and pleasure only filled my thoughts. Innocence, it is true, possessed my heart; but it was innocence unguarded, intoxicated with foolish desires, and liable to every temptation. During the first two hours we had many trifling adventures not worth remembering. At length my lord joined us, and continued with me all the evening; and we danced several dances together.

"I need not, I believe, tell you, madam, how engaging his conversation is. I wish I could with truth say I was not pleased with it; or, at least, that I had a right to be pleased with it. But I will disguise nothing from you. I now began to discover that he had some affection for me, but he had already too firm a footing in my esteem to make the discovery shocking. I will — I will own the truth;

Digitized by Google

I was delighted with perceiving a passion in him, which I was not unwilling to think he had had from the beginning, and to derive his having concealed it so long from his awe of my virtue, and his respect to my understanding. I assure you, madam, at the same time, my intentions were never to exceed the bounds of innocence. I was charmed with the delicacy of his passion; and, in the foolish thoughtless turn of mind in which I then was, I fancied I might give some very distant encouragement to such a passion in such a man with the utmost safety — that I might indulge my vanity and interest at once, without being guilty of the least injury.

"I know Mrs. Booth will condemn all these thoughts, and I condemn them no less myself; for it is now my stedfast opinion that the woman who gives up the least outwork of her virtue doth, in that very moment, betray the citadel.

"About two o'clock we returned home, and found a very handsome collation provided for us. I was asked to partake of it, and I did not, I could not refuse. I was not, however, entirely void of all suspicion, and I made many resolutions; one of which was, not to drink a drop more than my usual stint. This was, at the utmost, little more than half a pint of small punch.

"I adhered strictly to my quantity; but in the quality I am convinced I was deceived; for before I left the room I found my head giddy. What the villain gave me I know not; but, besides being intoxicated, I perceived effects from it which are not to be described.

Digitized by Google

"Here, madam, I must draw a curtain over the residue of that fatal night. Let it suffice that it involved me in the most dreadful ruin; a ruin to which I can truly say I never consented, and of which I was scarce conscious when the villanous man avowed it to my face in the morning.

"Thus I have deduced my story to the most horrid period; happy had I been had this been the period of my life, but I was reserved for greater miseries; but before I enter on them I will mention something very remarkable, with which I was now acquainted, and that will shew there was nothing of accident which had befallen me, but that all was the effect of a long, regular, premeditated design.

"You may remember, madam, I told you that we were recommended to Mrs. Ellison by the woman at whose house we had before lodged. This woman, it seems, was one of my lord's pimps, and had before introduced me to his lordship's notice.

"You are to know then, madam, that this villain, this lord, now confest to me that he had first seen me in the gallery at the oratorio, whither I had gone with tickets with which the woman where I first lodged had presented me, and which were, it seems, purchased by my lord. Here I first met the vile betrayer, who was disguised in a rug coat and a patch upon his face."

At these words Amelia cried, "O, gracious heavens!" and fell back in her chair. Mrs. Bennet, with proper applications, brought her back to life; and then Amelia acquainted her that she herself had first seen the same person in the same place, and in the

Digitized by Google

same disguise. "O, Mrs. Bennet!" cried she, "how am I indebted to you! what words, what thanks, what actions can demonstrate the gratitude of my sentiments! I look upon you, and always shall look upon you, as my preserver from the brink of a precipice, from which I was falling into the same ruin which you have so generously, so kindly, and so nobly disclosed for my sake."

Here the two ladies compared notes; and it appeared that his lordship's behaviour at the oratorio had been alike to both; that he had made use of the very same words, the very same actions to Amelia, which he had practised over before on poor unfortunate Mrs. Bennet. It may, perhaps, be thought strange that neither of them could afterwards recollect him; but so it was. And, indeed, if we consider the force of disguise, the very short time that either of them was with him at this first interview, and the very little curiosity that must have been supposed in the minds of the ladies, together with the amusement in which they were then engaged, all wonder will, I apprehend, cease. Amelia, however, now declared she remembered his voice and features perfectly well, and was thoroughly satisfied he was the same person. She then accounted for his not having visited in the afternoon, according to his promise, from her declared resolutions to Mrs. Ellison not to see him. She now burst forth into some very satirical invectives against that lady, and declared she had the art, as well as the wickedness, of the devil himself.

Many congratulations now past from Mrs. Bennet

Digitized by Google

to Amelia, which were returned with the most hearty acknowledgments from that lady. But, instead of filling our paper with these, we shall pursue Mrs. Bennet's story, which she resumed as we shall find in the next chapter.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER EIGHT

FURTHER CONTINUATION.

NO sooner," said Mrs. Bennet, continuing her story, "was my lord departed, than Mrs. Ellison came to me. She behaved in such a manner, when she became acquainted with what had past, that, though I was at first satisfied of her guilt, she began to stagger my opinion, and at length prevailed upon me entirely to acquit her. She raved like a mad woman against my lord, swore he should not stay a moment in her house, and that she would never speak to him more. In short, had she been the most innocent woman in the world, she could not have spoke nor acted any otherwise, nor could she have vented more wrath and indignation against the betrayer.

"That part of her denunciation of vengeance which concerned my lord's leaving the house she vowed should be executed immediately; but then, seeming to recollect herself, she said, 'Consider, my dear child, it is for your sake alone I speak; will not such a proceeding give some suspicion to your husband?' I answered, that I valued not that; that I was resolved to inform my husband of all the moment I saw him; with many expressions of detes-

Digitized by Google

tation of myself and an indifference for life and for everything else.

"Mrs. Ellison, however, found means to soothe me, and to satisfy me with my own innocence, a point in which, I believe, we are all easily convinced. In short, I was persuaded to acquit both myself and her, to lay the whole guilt upon my lord, and to resolve to conceal it from my husband.

"That whole day I confined myself to my chamber and saw no person but Mrs. Ellison. I was, indeed, ashamed to look any one in the face. Happily for me, my lord went into the country without attempting to come near me, for I believe his sight would have driven me to madness.

"The next day I told Mrs. Ellison that I was resolved to leave her lodgings the moment my lord came to town; not on her account (for I really inclined to think her innocent), but on my lord's, whose face I was resolved, if possible, never more to behold. She told me I had no reason to quit her house on that score, for that my lord himself had left her lodgings that morning in resentment, she believed, of the abuses which she had cast on him the day before.

"This confirmed me in the opinion of her innocence; nor hath she from that day to this, till my acquaintance with you, madam, done anything to forfeit my opinion. On the contrary, I owe her many good offices; amongst the rest, I have an annuity of one hundred and fifty pounds a-year from my lord, which I know was owing to her solicitations, for she is not void of generosity or good-

Digitized by Google

nature; though by what I have lately seen, I am convinced she was the cause of my ruin, and hath endeavoured to lay the same snares for you.

"But to return to my melancholy story. My husband returned at the appointed time; and I met him with an agitation of mind not to be described. Perhaps the fatigue which he had undergone in his journey, and his dissatisfaction at his ill success, prevented his taking notice of what I feared was too visible. All his hopes were entirely frustrated; the clergyman had not received the bishop's letter, and as to my lord's he treated it with derision and contempt. Tired as he was, Mr. Bennet would not sit down till he had enquired for my lord, intending to go and pay his compliments. Poor man! he little suspected that he had deceived him, as I have since known, concerning the bishop; much less did he suspect any other injury. But the lord — the villain was gone out of town, so that he was forced to postpone all his gratitude.

"Mr. Bennet returned to town late on the Saturday night, nevertheless he performed his duty at church the next day, but I refused to go with him. This, I think, was the first refusal I was guilty of since our marriage; but I was become so miserable, that his presence, which had been the source of all my happiness, was become my bane. I will not say I hated to see him, but I can say I was ashamed, indeed afraid, to look him in the face. I was conscious of I knew not what —— guilt I hope it cannot be called."

"I hope not, nay, I think not," cries Amelia.

Digitized by Google

"My husband," continued Mrs. Bennet, "perceived my dissatisfaction, and imputed it to his ill-success in the country. I was pleased with this self-delusion, and yet, when I fairly compute the agonies I suffered at his endeavours to comfort me on that head, I paid most severely for it. O, my dear Mrs. Booth! happy is the deceived party between true lovers, and wretched indeed is the author of the deceit!

"In this wretched condition I passed a whole week, the most miserable I think of my whole life, endeavouring to humour my husband's delusion and to conceal my own tortures; but I had reason to fear I could not succeed long, for on the Saturday night I perceived a visible alteration in his behaviour to me. He went to bed in an apparent ill-humour, turned sullenly from me, and if I offered at any endearments he gave me only peevish answers.

"After a restless turbulent night, he rose early on Sunday morning and walked down-stairs. I expected his return to breakfast, but was soon informed by the maid that he was gone forth, and that it was no more than seven o'clock. All this you may believe, madam, alarmed me. I saw plainly he had discovered the fatal secret, though by what means I could not divine. The state of my mind was very little short of madness. Sometimes I thought of running away from my injured husband, and sometimes of putting an end to my life.

"In the midst of such perturbations I spent the day. My husband returned in the evening. O, Heavens! can I describe what followed?—It is im-

Digitized by Google

possible! I shall sink under the relation. He entered the room with a face as white as a sheet, his lips trembling and his eyes red as coals of fire starting as it were from his head. — 'Molly,' cries he, throwing himself into his chair, 'are you well?' 'Good Heavens!' says I, 'what 's the matter? — Indeed I can't say I am well.' 'No!' says he, starting from his chair, 'false monster, you have betrayed me, destroyed me, you have ruined your husband!' Then looking like a fury, he snatched off a large book from the table, and, with the malice of a madman, threw it at my head and knocked me down backwards. He then caught me up in his arms and kissed me with most extravagant tenderness; then, looking me stedfastly in the face for several moments, the tears gushed in a torrent from his eyes, and with his utmost violence he threw me again on the floor, kicked me, stamped upon me. I believe, indeed, his intent was to kill me, and I believe he thought he had accomplished it.

"I lay on the ground for some minutes, I believe, deprived of my senses. When I recovered myself I found my husband lying by my side on his face, and the blood running from him. It seems, when he thought he had despatched me, he ran his head with all his force against a chest of drawers which stood in the room, and gave himself a dreadful wound in his head.

"I can truly say I felt not the least resentment for the usage I had received; I thought I deserved it all; though, indeed, I little guessed what he had suffered from me. I now used the most earnest entreaties to

Digitized by Google

him to compose himself; and endeavoured, with my feeble arms, to raise him from the ground. At length he broke from me, and, springing from the ground, flung himself into a chair, when, looking wildly at me, he cried — 'Go from me, Molly. I beseech you, leave me. I would not kill you.' — He then discovered to me — O Mrs. Booth! can you not guess it? — I was indeed polluted by the villain — I had infected my husband. — O heavens! why do I live to relate anything so horrid — I will not, I cannot yet survive it. I cannot forgive myself. Heaven cannot forgive me!"

Here she became inarticulate with the violence of her grief, and fell presently into such agonies, that the frighted Amelia began to call aloud for some assistance. Upon this a maid-servant came up, who, seeing her mistress in a violent convulsion fit, presently screamed out she was dead. Upon which one of the other sex made his appearance: and who should this be but the honest serjeant? whose countenance soon made it evident that, though a soldier, and a brave one too, he was not the least concerned of all the company on this occasion.

The reader, if he hath been acquainted with scenes of this kind, very well knows that Mrs. Bennet, in the usual time, returned again to the possession of her voice: the first use of which she made was to express her astonishment at the presence of the serjeant, and, with a frantic air, to enquire who he was.

The maid, concluding that her mistress was not yet returned to her senses, answered, "Why, 't is my master, madam. Heaven preserve your senses,

Digitized by Google

madam! — Lord, sir, my mistress must be very bad not to know you!"

What Atkinson thought at this instant, I will not say; but certain it is he looked not over-wise. He attempted twice to take hold of Mrs. Bennet's hand, but she withdrew it hastily, and presently after, rising up from her chair, she declared herself pretty well again, and desired Atkinson and the maid to withdraw. Both of whom presently obeyed: the serjeant appearing by his countenance to want comfort almost as much as the lady did to whose assistance he had been summoned.

It is a good maxim to trust a person entirely or not at all; for a secret is often innocently blabbed out by those who know but half of it. Certain it is that the maid's speech communicated a suspicion to the mind of Amelia which the behaviour of the serjeant did not tend to remove: what that is, the sagacious readers may likewise probably suggest to themselves; if not, they must wait our time for disclosing it. We shall now resume the history of Mrs. Bennet, who, after many apologies, proceeded to the matters in the next chapter.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER NINE

THE CONCLUSION OF MRS. BENNET'S HISTORY.

"WHEN I became sensible," cries Mrs. Bennet, "of the injury I had done my husband, I threw myself at his feet, and embracing his knees, while I bathed them with my tears, I begged a patient hearing, declaring, if he was not satisfied with what I should say, I would become a willing victim of his resentment. I said, and I said truly, that, if I owed my death that instant to his hands, I should have no other terrour but of the fatal consequence which it might produce to himself.

"He seemed a little pacified, and bid me say whatever I pleased.

"I then gave him a faithful relation of all that had happened. He heard me with great attention, and at the conclusion cried, with a deep sigh — 'O Molly! I believe it all. — You must have been betrayed as you tell me; you could not be guilty of such baseness, such cruelty, such ingratitude.' He then — O! it is impossible to describe his behaviour — he exprest such kindness, such tenderness, such concern for the manner in which he had used me — I cannot dwell on this scene — I shall relapse — you must excuse me."

Digitized by Google

Amelia begged her to omit anything which so affected her; and she proceeded thus:

"My husband, who was more convinced than I was of Mrs. Ellison's guilt, declared he would not sleep that night in her house. He then went out to see for a lodging; he gave me all the money he had, and left me to pay her bill, and put up the cloaths, telling me, if I had not money enough, I might leave the cloaths as a pledge; but he vowed he could not answer for himself if he saw the face of Mrs. Ellison.

"Words cannot scarce express the behaviour of that artful woman, it was so kind and so generous. She said, she did not blame my husband's resentment, nor could she expect any other, but that he and all the world should censure her — that she hated her house almost as much as we did, and detested her cousin, if possible, more. In fine, she said I might leave my cloaths there that evening, but that she would send them to us the next morning; that she scorned the thought of detaining them; and as for the paultry debt, we might pay her whenever we pleased; for, to do her justice, with all her vices, she hath some good in her."

"Some good in her, indeed!" cried Amelia, with great indignation.

"We were scarce settled in our new lodgings," continued Mrs. Bennet, "when my husband began to complain of a pain in his inside. He told me he feared he had done himself some injury in his rage, and burst something within him. As to the odious — I cannot bear the thought, the great skill of his surgeon soon entirely cured him; but his other com-

Digitized by Google

plaint, instead of yielding to any application, grew still worse and worse, nor ever ended till it brought him to his grave.

"Oh Mrs. Booth! could I have been certain that I had occasioned this, however innocently I had occasioned it, I could never have survived it; but the surgeon who opened him after his death assured me that he died of what they called a polypus in his heart, and that nothing which had happened on account of me was in the least the occasion of it.

"I have, however, related the affair truly to you. The first complaint I ever heard of the kind was within a day or two after we left Mrs. Ellison's; and this complaint remained till his death, which might induce him perhaps to attribute his death to another cause; but the surgeon, who is a man of the highest eminence, hath always declared the contrary to me, with the most positive certainty; and this opinion hath been my only comfort.

"When my husband died, which was about ten weeks after we quitted Mrs. Ellison's, of whom I had then a different opinion from what I have now, I was left in the most wretched condition imaginable. I believe, madam, she shewed you my letter. Indeed, she did everything for me at that time which I could have expected from the best of friends. She supplied me with money from her own pocket, by which means I was preserved from a distress in which I must have otherwise inevitably perished.

"Her kindness to me in this season of distress prevailed on me to return again to her house. Why,

Digitized by Google

indeed, should I have refused an offer so very convenient for me to accept, and which seemed so generous in her to make? Here I lived a very retired life with my little babe, seeing no company but Mrs. Ellison herself for a full quarter of a year. At last Mrs. Ellison brought me a parchment from my lord, in which he had settled upon me, at her instance, as she told me, and as I believe it was, an annuity of one hundred and fifty pounds a-year. This was, I think, the very first time she had mentioned his hateful name to me since my return to her house. And she now prevailed upon me, though I assure you not without some difficulty, to suffer him to execute the deed in my presence.

"I will not describe our interview — I am not able to describe it, and I have often wondered how I found spirits to support it. This I will say for him, that, if he was not a real penitent, no man alive could act the part better.

"Beside resentment, I had another motive of my backwardness to agree to such a meeting; and this was — fear. I apprehended, and surely not without reason, that the annuity was rather meant as a bribe than a recompence, and that further designs were laid against my innocence; but in this I found myself happily deceived; for neither then, nor at any time since, have I ever had the least solicitation of that kind. Nor, indeed, have I seen the least occasion to think my lord had any such desires.

"Good heavens! what are these men? what is this appetite which must have novelty and resistance for its provocatives, and which is delighted with us no

Digitized by Google

longer than while we may be considered in the light of enemies?"

"I thank you, madam," cries Amelia, "for relieving me from my fears on your account; I trembled at the consequence of this second acquaintance with such a man, and in such a situation."

"I assure you, madam, I was in no danger," returned Mrs. Bennet; "for, besides that I think I could have pretty well relied on my own resolution, I have heard since, at St. Edmundsbury, from an intimate acquaintance of my lord's, who was an entire stranger to my affairs, that the highest degree of inconstancy is his character; and that few of his numberless mistresses have ever received a second visit from him.

"Well, madam," continued she, "I think I have little more to trouble you with; unless I should relate to you my long ill state of health, from which I am lately, I thank Heaven, recovered; or unless I should mention to you the most grievous accident that ever befel me, the loss of my poor dear Charley." Here she made a full stop, and the tears ran down into her bosom.

Amelia was silent a few minutes, while she gave the lady time to vent her passion; after which she began to pour forth a vast profusion of acknowledgments for the trouble she had taken in relating her history, but chiefly for the motive which had induced her to it, and for the kind warning which she had given her by the little note which Mrs. Bennet had sent her that morning.

"Yes, madam," cries Mrs. Bennet, "I am con-

Digitized by Google

vinced, by what I have lately seen, that you are the destined sacrifice to this wicked lord; and that Mrs. Ellison, whom I no longer doubt to have been the instrument of my ruin, intended to betray you in the same manner. The day I met my lord in your apartment I began to entertain some suspicions, and I took Mrs. Ellison very roundly to task upon them; her behaviour, notwithstanding many asseverations to the contrary, convinced me I was right; and I intended, more than once, to speak to you, but could not; till last night the mention of the masquerade determined me to delay it no longer. I therefore sent you that note this morning, and am glad you so luckily discovered the writer, as it hath given me this opportunity of easing my mind, and of honestly shewing you how unworthy I am of your friendship, at the same time that I so earnestly desire it."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER TEN

BEING THE LAST CHAPTER OF THE SEVENTH BOOK.

AMELIA did not fail to make proper compliments to Mrs. Bennet on the conclusion of her speech in the last chapter. She told her that, from the first moment of her acquaintance, she had the strongest inclination to her friendship, and that her desires of that kind were much increased by hearing her story. "Indeed, madam," says she, "you are much too severe a judge on yourself; for they must have very little candour, in my opinion, who look upon your case with any severe eye. To me, I assure you, you appear highly the object of compassion; and I shall always esteem you as an innocent and an unfortunate woman."

Amelia would then have taken her leave, but Mrs. Bennet so strongly pressed her to stay to breakfast, that at length she complied; indeed, she had fasted so long, and her gentle spirits had been so agitated with variety of passions, that nature very strongly seconded Mrs. Bennet's motion.

Whilst the maid was preparing the tea-equipage, Amelia, with a little slyness in her countenance, asked Mrs. Bennet if serjeant Atkinson did not lodge in the same house with her? The other reddened so extremely at the question, repeated the serjeant's

Digitized by Google

name with such hesitation, and behaved so aukwardly, that Amelia wanted no further confirmation of her suspicions. She would not, however, declare them abruptly to the other, but began a dissertation on the serjeant's virtues ; and, after observing the great concern which he had manifested when Mrs. Bennet was in her fit, concluded with saying she believed the serjeant would make the best husband in the world, for that he had great tenderness of heart and a gentleness of manners not often to be found in any man, and much seldomer in persons of his rank.

"And why not in his rank?" said Mrs. Bennet. "Indeed, Mrs. Booth, we rob the lower order of mankind of their due. I do not deny the force and power of education; but, when we consider how very injudicious is the education of the better sort in general, how little they are instructed in the practice of virtue, we shall not expect to find the heart much improved by it. And even as to the head, how very slightly do we commonly find it improved by what is called a genteel education! I have myself, I think, seen instances of as great goodness, and as great understanding too, among the lower sort of people as among the higher. Let us compare your serjeant, now, with the lord who hath been the subject of conversation; on which side would an impartial judge decide the balance to incline?"

"How monstrous then," cries Amelia, "is the opinion of those who consider our matching ourselves the least below us in degree as a kind of contamination!"

"A most absurd and preposterous sentiment," an-

Digitized by Google

swered Mrs. Bennet warmly; "how abhorrent from justice, from common sense, and from humanity — but how extremely incongruous with a religion which professes to know no difference of degree, but ranks all mankind on the footing of brethren! Of all kinds of pride, there is none so unchristian as that of station; in reality, there is none so contemptible. Contempt, indeed, may be said to be its own object; for my own part, I know none so despicable as those who despise others."

"I do assure you," said Amelia, "you speak my own sentiments. I give you my word, I should not be ashamed of being the wife of an honest man in any station. — Nor if I had been much higher than I was, should I have thought myself degraded by calling our honest serjeant my husband."

"Since you have made this declaration," cries Mrs. Bennet, "I am sure you will not be offended at a secret I am going to mention to you."

"Indeed, my dear," answered Amelia, smiling, "I wonder rather you have concealed it so long; especially after the many hints I have given you."

"Nay, pardon me, madam," replied the other; "I do not remember any such hints; and, perhaps, you do not even guess what I am going to say. My secret is this; that no woman ever had so sincere, so passionate a lover, as you have had in the serjeant."

"I a lover in the serjeant! — I!" cries Amelia, a little surprized.

"Have patience," answered the other; — "I say, you, my dear. As much surprized as you appear, I tell you no more than the truth; and yet it is a truth

Digitized by Google

you could hardly expect to hear from me, especially with so much good-humour; since I will honestly confess to you. — But what need have I to confess what I know you guess already? — Tell me now sincerely, don't you guess?"

"I guess, indeed, and hope," said she, "that he is your husband."

"He is, indeed, my husband," cries the other; "and I am most happy in your approbation. In honest truth, you ought to approve my choice; since you was every way the occasion of my making it. What you said of him very greatly recommended him to my opinion; but he endeared himself to me most by what he said of you. In short, I have discovered that he hath always loved you with such a faithful, honest, noble, generous passion, that I was consequently convinced his mind must possess all the ingredients of such a passion; and what are these but true honour, goodness, modesty, bravery, tenderness, and, in a word, every human virtue? — Forgive me, my dear; but I was uneasy till I became myself the object of such a passion."

"And do you really think," said Amelia, smiling, "that I shall forgive you robbing me of such a lover? or, supposing what you banter me with was true, do you really imagine you could change such a passion?"

"No, my dear," answered the other; "I only hope I have changed the object; for be assured, there is no greater vulgar error than that it is impossible for a man who loves one woman ever to love another. On the contrary, it is certain that a man who can love one woman so well at a distance will love another

Digitized by Google

better that is nearer to him. Indeed, I have heard one of the best husbands in the world declare, in the presence of his wife, that he had always loved a princess with adoration. These passions, which reside only in very amorous and very delicate minds, feed only on the delicacies there growing; and leave all the substantial food, and enough of the delicacy too, for the wife."

The tea being now ready, Mrs. Bennet, or, if you please, for the future, Mrs. Atkinson, proposed to call in her husband; but Amelia objected. She said she should be glad to see him any other time, but was then in the utmost hurry, as she had been three hours absent from all she most loved. However, she had scarce drank a dish of tea before she changed her mind; and, saying she would not part man and wife, desired Mr. Atkinson might appear.

The maid answered that her master was not at home; which words she had scarce spoken, when he knocked hastily at the door, and immediately came running into the room, all pale and breathless, and, addressing himself to Amelia, cried out, "I am sorry, my dear lady, to bring you ill news; but Captain Booth" — "What! what!" cries Amelia, dropping the tea-cup from her hand, "is anything the matter with him?" — "Don't be frightened, my dear lady," said the serjeant: "he is in very good health; but a misfortune hath happened." — "Are my children well?" said Amelia. — "O, very well," answered the serjeant. "Pray, madam, don't be frightened; I hope it will signify nothing — he is arrested, but I hope to get him out of their damned hands immediately."

Digitized by Google

"Where is he?" cries Amelia; "I will go to him this instant!" "He begs you will not," answered the serjeant. "I have sent his lawyer to him, and am going back with Mrs. Ellison this moment; but I beg your ladyship, for his sake, and for your own sake, not to go." "Mrs. Ellison! what is Mrs. Ellison to do?" cries Amelia: "I must and will go." Mrs. Atkinson then interposed, and begged that she would not hurry her spirits, but compose herself, and go home to her children, whither she would attend her. She comforted her with the thoughts that the captain was in no immediate danger; that she could go to him when she would; and desired her to let the serjeant return with Mrs. Ellison, saying she might be of service, and that there was much wisdom, and no kind of shame, in making use of bad people on certain occasions.

"And who," cries Amelia, a little come to herself, "hath done this barbarous action?"

"One I am ashamed to name," cries the serjeant; "indeed I had always a very different opinion of him: I could not have believed anything but my own ears and eyes; but Dr. Harrison is the man who hath done the deed."

"Dr. Harrison!" cries Amelia. "Well, then, there is an end of all goodness in the world. I will never have a good opinion of any human being more."

The serjeant begged that he might not be detained from the captain; and that, if Amelia pleased to go home, he would wait upon her. But she did not chuse to see Mrs. Ellison at this time; and,

Digitized by Google

after a little consideration, she resolved to stay where she was; and Mrs. Atkinson agreed to go and fetch her children to her, it being not many doors distant.

The serjeant then departed; Amelia, in her confusion, never having once thought of wishing him joy on his marriage.

Digitized by Google

BOOK VIII

CHAPTER ONE

BEING THE FIRST CHAPTER OF THE EIGHTH BOOK.

THE history must now look a little backwards to those circumstances which led to the catastrophe mentioned at the end of the last book.

When Amelia went out in the morning she left her children to the care of her husband. In this amiable office he had been engaged near an hour, and was at that very time lying along on the floor, and his little things crawling and playing about him, when a most violent knock was heard at the door; and immediately a footman, running upstairs, acquainted him that his lady was taken violently ill, and carried into Mrs. Chenevix's toy-shop.

Booth no sooner heard this account, which was delivered with great appearance of haste and earnestness, than he leapt suddenly from the floor, and, leaving his children, roaring at the news of their mother's illness, in strict charge with his maid, he ran as fast as his legs could carry him to the place; or towards the place rather: for, before he arrived at the shop, a gentleman stopt him full butt, crying, "Captain, whither so fast?" — Booth answered

Digitized by Google

eagerly, "Whoever you are, friend, don't ask me any questions now." — "You must pardon me, captain," answered the gentleman; "but I have a little business with your honour — In short, captain, I have a small warrant here in my pocket against your honour, at the suit of one Dr. Harrison." "You are a bailiff then?" says Booth. "I am an officer, sir," answered the other. "Well, sir, it is in vain to contend," cries Booth; "but let me beg you will permit me only to step to Mrs. Chenevix's — I will attend you, upon my honour, wherever you please; but my wife lies violently ill there." "Oh, for that matter," answered the bailiff, "you may set your heart at ease. Your lady, I hope, is very well; I assure you she is not there. You will excuse me, captain, these are only stratagems of war. *Bolus and virtus, quis in a hostess equirit?*" "Sir, I honour your learning," cries Booth, "and could almost kiss you for what you tell me. I assure you I would forgive you five hundred arrests for such a piece of news. Well, sir, and whither am I to go with you?" "O, anywhere: where your honour pleases," cries the bailiff. "Then suppose we go to Brown's coffee-house," said the prisoner. "No," answered the bailiff, "that will not do; that's in the verge of the court." "Why then, to the nearest tavern," said Booth. "No, not to a tavern," cries the other, "that is not a place of security; and you know, captain, your honour is a shy cock; I have been after your honour these three months. Come, sir, you must go to my house, if you please." "With all my heart," answered Booth, "if it be anywhere hereabouts." "Oh, it is but a

Digitized by Google

little ways off," replied the bailiff; "it is only in Gray's-inn-lane, just by almost." He then called a coach, and desired his prisoner to walk in.

Booth entered the coach without any resistance, which, had he been inclined to make, he must have plainly perceived would have been ineffectual, as the bailiff appeared to have several followers at hand, two of whom, beside the commander in chief, mounted with him into the coach. As Booth was a sweet-tempered man, as well as somewhat of a philosopher, he behaved with all the good-humour imaginable, and indeed, with more than his companions; who, however, shewed him what they call civility, that is, they neither struck him nor spit in his face.

Notwithstanding the pleasantry which Booth endeavoured to preserve, he in reality envied every labourer whom he saw pass by him in his way. The charms of liberty, against his will, rushed on his mind; and he could not avoid suggesting to himself how much more happy was the poorest wretch who, without controul, could repair to his homely habitation and to his family, compared to him, who was thus violently, and yet lawfully, torn away from the company of his wife and children. And their condition, especially that of his Amelia, gave his heart many a severe and bitter pang.

At length he arrived at the bailiff's mansion, and was ushered into a room in which were several persons. Booth desired to be alone; upon which the bailiff waited on him up-stairs into an apartment, the windows of which were well fortified with iron bars, but the walls had not the least outwork raised before

Digitized by Google

them; they were, indeed, what is generally called naked; the bricks having been only covered with a thin plaster, which in many places was mouldered away.

The first demand made upon Booth was for coach-hire, which amounted to two shillings, according to the bailiff's account; that being just double the legal fare. He was then asked if he did not chuse a bowl of punch? to which he having answered in the negative, the bailiff replied, "Nay, sir, just as you please. I don't ask you to drink, if you don't chuse it; but certainly you know the custom; the house is full of prisoners, and I can't afford gentlemen a room to themselves for nothing."

Booth presently took this hint — indeed it was a pretty broad one — and told the bailiff he should not scruple to pay him his price; but in fact he never drank unless at his meals. "As to that, sir," cries the bailiff, "it is just as your honour pleases. I scorn to impose upon any gentleman in misfortunes: I wish you well out of them, for my part. Your honour can take nothing amiss of me; I only does my duty, what I am bound to do; and, as you says you don't care to drink anything, what will you be pleased to have for dinner?"

Booth then complied in bespeaking a dish of meat, and told the bailiff he would drink a bottle with him after dinner. He then desired the favour of pen, ink, and paper, and a messenger; all which were immediately procured him, the bailiff telling him he might send wherever he pleased, and repeating his concern for Booth's misfortunes, and a hearty desire to see the end of them.

Digitized by Google

The messenger was just dispatched with the letter, when who should arrive but honest Atkinson? A soldier of the guards, belonging to the same company with the serjeant, and who had known Booth at Gibraltar, had seen the arrest, and heard the orders given to the coachman. This fellow, accidentally meeting Atkinson, had acquainted him with the whole affair.

At the appearance of Atkinson, joy immediately overspread the countenance of Booth. The ceremonials which past between them are unnecessary to be repeated. Atkinson was soon dispatched to the attorney and to Mrs. Ellison, as the reader hath before heard from his own mouth.

Booth now greatly lamented that he had writ to his wife. He thought she might have been acquainted with the affair better by the serjeant. Booth begged him, however, to do everything in his power to comfort her; to assure her that he was in perfect health and good spirits; and to lessen as much as possible the concern which he knew she would have at the reading his letter.

The serjeant, however, as the reader hath seen, brought himself the first account of the arrest. Indeed, the other messenger did not arrive till a full hour afterwards. This was not owing to any slowness of his, but to many previous errands which he was to execute before the delivery of the letter; for, notwithstanding the earnest desire which the bailiff had declared to see Booth out of his troubles, he had ordered the porter, who was his follower, to call upon two or three other bailiffs, and as many

Digitized by Google

attorneys, to try to load his prisoner with as many actions as possible.

Here the reader may be apt to conclude that the bailiff, instead of being a friend, was really an enemy to poor Booth; but, in fact, he was not so. His desire was no more than to accumulate bail-bonds; for the bailiff was reckoned an honest and good sort of man in his way, and had no more malice against the bodies in his custody than a butcher hath to those in his: and as the latter, when he takes his knife in hand, hath no idea but of the joints into which he is to cut the carcase; so the former, when he handles his writ, hath no other design but to cut out the body into as many bail-bonds as possible. As to the life of the animal, or the liberty of the man, they are thoughts which never obtrude themselves on either.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER TWO

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF MR. BOOTH'S FELLOW-SUFFERERS.

BEFORE we return to Amelia we must detain our reader a little longer with Mr. Booth, in the custody of Mr. Bondum the bailiff, who now informed his prisoner that he was welcome to the liberty of the house with the other gentlemen.

Booth asked who those gentlemen were. "One of them, sir," says Mr. Bondum, "is a very great writer or author, as they call him; he hath been here these five weeks at the suit of a bookseller for eleven pound odd money; but he expects to be discharged in a day or two, for he hath writ out the debt. He is now writing for five or six booksellers, and he will get you sometimes, when he sits to it, a matter of fifteen shillings a-day. For he is a very good pen, they say, but is apt to be idle. Some days he won't write above five hours; but at other times I have known him at it above sixteen." "Ay!" cries Booth; "pray, what are his productions? What does he write?" "Why, sometimes," answered Bondum, "he writes your history books for your numbers, and sometimes your verses, your poems, what do you call them? and then again he writes news for your newspapers." "Ay, indeed! he is a most extraor-

Digitized by Google

dinary man, truly! — How doth he get his news here?" "Why he makes it, as he doth your parliament speeches for your magazines. He reads them to us sometimes over a bowl of punch. To be sure it is all one as if one was in the parliament house — it is about liberty and freedom, and about the constitution of England. I say nothing for my part, for I will keep my neck out of a halter; but, faith, he makes it out plainly to me that all matters are not as they should be. I am all for liberty, for my part." "Is that so consistent with your calling?" cries Booth. "I thought, my friend, you had lived by depriving men of their liberty." "That's another matter," cries the bailiff; "that 's all according to law, and in the way of business. To be sure, men must be obliged to pay their debts, or else there would be an end of everything." Booth desired the bailiff to give him his opinion on liberty. Upon which, he hesitated a moment, and then cried out, "O 't is a fine thing, 't is a very fine thing, and the constitution of England." Booth told him, that by the old constitution of England he had heard that men could not be arrested for debt; to which the bailiff answered, that must have been in very bad times; "because as why," says he, "would it not be the hardest thing in the world if a man could not arrest another for a just and lawful debt? besides, sir, you must be mistaken; for how could that ever be? is not liberty the constitution of England? well, and is not the constitution, as a man may say — whereby the constitution, that is the law and liberty, and all that —"

Digitized by Google

Booth had a little mercy upon the poor bailiff, when he found him rounding in this manner, and told him he had made the matter very clear. Booth then proceeded to enquire after the other gentlemen, his fellows in affliction; upon which Bondum acquainted him that one of the prisoners was a poor fellow. "He calls himself a gentleman," said Bondum; "but I am sure I never saw anything genteel by him. In a week that he hath been in my house he hath drank only part of one bottle of wine. I intend to carry him to Newgate within a day or two, if he can't find bail, which, I suppose, he will not be able to do; for everybody says he is an undone man. He hath run out all he hath by losses in business, and one way or other; and he hath a wife and seven children. Here was the whole family here the other day, all howling together. I never saw such a beggarly crew; I was almost ashamed to see them in my house. I thought they seemed fitter for Bridewell than any other place. To be sure, I do not reckon him as proper company for such as you, sir; but there is another prisoner in the house that I dare say you will like very much. He is, indeed, very much of a gentleman, and spends his money like one. I have had him only three days, and I am afraid he won't stay much longer. They say, indeed, he is a gamester; but what is that to me or any one, as long as a man appears as a gentleman? I always love to speak by people as I find; and, in my opinion, he is fit company for the greatest lord in the land; for he hath very good cloaths, and money enough. He is not here for debt, but upon a judge's warrant for

Digitized by Google

an assault and battery; for the tipstaff locks up here."

The bailiff was thus haranguing when he was interrupted by the arrival of the attorney whom the trusty serjeant had, with the utmost expedition, found out and dispatched to the relief of his distressed friend. But before we proceed any further with the captain we will return to poor Amelia, for whom, considering the situation in which we left her, the good-natured reader may be, perhaps, in no small degree solicitous.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER THREE

CONTAINING SOME EXTRAORDINARY BEHAVIOUR IN MRS. ELLISON.

THE serjeant being departed to convey Mrs. Ellison to the captain, his wife went to fetch Amelia's children to their mother.

Amelia's concern for the distresses of her husband was aggravated at the sight of her children. "Good Heavens!" she cried, "what will — what can become of these poor little wretches? why have I produced these little creatures only to give them a share of poverty and misery?" At which words she embraced them eagerly in her arms, and bedewed them both with her tears.

The children's eyes soon overflowed as fast as their mother's, though neither of them knew the cause of her affliction. The little boy, who was the elder and much the sharper of the two, imputed the agonies of his mother to her illness, according to the account brought to his father in his presence.

When Amelia became acquainted with the child's apprehensions, she soon satisfied him that she was in a perfect state of health; at which the little thing expressed great satisfaction, and said he was glad she was well again. Amelia told him she had not been

Digitized by Google

in the least disordered. Upon which the innocent cried out, "La! how can people tell such fibs? a great tall man told my papa you was taken very ill at Mrs. Somebody's shop, and my poor papa presently ran down-stairs: I was afraid he would have broke his neck, to come to you."

"O, the villains!" cries Mrs. Atkinson, "what a stratagem was here to take away your husband!"

"Take away!" answered the child — "What! hath anybody taken away papa? — Sure that naughty fibbing man hath not taken away papa?"

Amelia begged Mrs. Atkinson to say something to her children, for that her spirits were overpowered. She then threw herself into a chair, and gave a full vent to a passion almost too strong for her delicate constitution.

The scene that followed, during some minutes, is beyond my power of description; I must beg the readers' hearts to suggest it to themselves. The children hung on their mother, whom they endeavoured in vain to comfort, as Mrs. Atkinson did in vain attempt to pacify them, telling them all would be well, and they would soon see their papa again.

At length, partly by the persuasions of Mrs. Atkinson, partly from consideration of her little ones, and more, perhaps, from the relief which she had acquired by her tears, Amelia became a little composed.

Nothing worth notice past in this miserable company from this time till the return of Mrs. Ellison from the bailiff's house; and to draw out scenes of wretchedness to too great a length, is a task very

Digitized by Google

uneasy to the writer, and for which none but readers of a most gloomy complexion will think themselves ever obliged to his labours.

At length Mrs. Ellison arrived, and entered the room with an air of gaiety rather misbecoming the occasion. When she had seated herself in a chair she told Amelia that the captain was very well and in good spirits, and that he earnestly desired her to keep up hers. "Come, madam," said she, "don't be disconsolate; I hope we shall soon be able to get him out of his troubles. The debts, indeed, amount to more than I expected; however, ways may be found to redeem him. He must own himself guilty of some rashness in going out of the verge, when he knew to what he was liable; but that is now not to be remedied. If he had followed my advice this had not happened; but men will be headstrong."

"I cannot bear this," cries Amelia; "shall I hear that best of creatures blamed for his tenderness to me?"

"Well, I will not blame him," answered Mrs. Ellison; "I am sure I propose nothing but to serve him; and if you will do as much to serve him yourself, he will not be long a prisoner."

"I do!" cries Amelia: "O Heavens! is there a thing upon earth—"

"Yes, there is a thing upon earth," said Mrs. Ellison, "and a very easy thing too; and yet I will venture my life you start when I propose it. And yet, when I consider that you are a woman of understanding, I know not why I should think so; for sure you must have too much good sense to imagine

Digitized by Google

that you can cry your husband out of prison. If this would have done, I see you have almost cried your eyes out already. And yet you may do the business by a much pleasanter way than by crying and bawling."

"What do you mean, madam?" cries Amelia.—"For my part, I cannot guess your meaning."

"Before I tell you then, madam," answered Mrs. Ellison, "I must inform you, if you do not already know it, that the captain is charged with actions to the amount of near five hundred pounds. I am sure I would willingly be his bail; but I know my bail would not be taken for that sum. You must consider, therefore, madam, what chance you have of redeeming him; unless you chuse, as perhaps some wives would, that he should lie all his life in prison."

At these words Amelia discharged a shower of tears, and gave every mark of the most frantic grief.

"Why, there now," cries Mrs. Ellison, "while you will indulge these extravagant passions, how can you be capable of listening to the voice of reason? I know I am a fool in concerning myself thus with the affairs of others. I know the thankless office I undertake; and yet I love you so, my dear Mrs. Booth, that I cannot bear to see you afflicted, and I would comfort you if you would suffer me. Let me beg you to make your mind easy; and within these two days I will engage to set your husband at liberty.

"Harkee, child; only behave like a woman of

Digitized by Google

spirit this evening, and keep your appointment, notwithstanding what hath happened; and I am convinced there is one who hath the power and the will to serve you."

Mrs. Ellison spoke the latter part of her speech in a whisper, so that Mrs. Atkinson, who was then engaged with the children, might not hear her; but Amelia answered aloud, and said, "What appointment would you have me keep this evening?"

"Nay, nay, if you have forgot," cries Mrs. Ellison, "I will tell you more another time; but come, will you go home? my dinner is ready by this time, and you shall dine with me."

"Talk not to me of dinners," cries Amelia; "my stomach is too full already."

"Nay, but, dear madam," answered Mrs. Ellison, "let me beseech you to go home with me. I do not care," says she, whispering, "to speak before some folks."

"I have no secret, madam, in the world," replied Amelia aloud, "which I would not communicate to this lady; for I shall always acknowledge the highest obligations to her for the secrets she hath imparted to me."

"Madam," said Mrs. Ellison, "I do not interfere with obligations. I am glad the lady hath obliged you so much; and I wish all people were equally mindful of obligations. I hope I have omitted no opportunity of endeavouring to oblige Mrs. Booth, as well as I have some other folks."

"If by other folks, madam, you mean me," cries Mrs. Atkinson, "I confess I sincerely believe you

Digitized by Google

intended the same obligation to us both; and I have the pleasure to think it is owing to me that this lady is not as much obliged to you as I am."

"I protest, madam, I can hardly guess your meaning," said Mrs. Ellison. — "Do you really intend to affront me, madam?"

"I intend to preserve innocence and virtue, if it be in my power, madam," answered the other. "And sure nothing but the most eager resolution to destroy it could induce you to mention such an appointment at such a time."

"I did not expect this treatment from you, madam," cries Mrs. Ellison; "such ingratitude I could not have believed had it been reported to me by any other."

"Such impudence," answered Mrs. Atkinson, "must exceed, I think, all belief; but, when women once abandon that modesty which is the characteristic of their sex, they seldom set any bounds to their assurance."

"I could not have believed this to have been in human nature," cries Mrs. Ellison. "Is this the woman whom I have fed, have cloathed, have supported; who owes to my charity and my intercessions that she is not at this day destitute of all the necessaries of life?"

"I own it all," answered Mrs. Atkinson; "and I add the favour of a masquerade ticket to the number. Could I have thought, madam, that you would before my face have asked another lady to go to the same place with the same man? — but I ask your pardon; I impute rather more assurance to you

Digitized by Google

than you are mistress of. — You have endeavoured to keep the assignation a secret from me; and it was by mere accident only that I discovered it; unless there are some guardian angels that in general protect innocence and virtue; though, I may say, I have not always found them so watchful."

"Indeed, madam," said Mrs. Ellison, "you are not worth my answer; nor will I stay a moment longer with such a person. — So, Mrs. Booth, you have your choice, madam, whether you will go with me, or remain in the company of this lady."

"If so, madam," answered Mrs. Booth, "I shall not be long in determining to stay where I am."

Mrs. Ellison then, casting a look of great indignation at both the ladies, made a short speech full of invectives against Mrs. Atkinson, and not without oblique hints of ingratitude against poor Amelia; after which she burst out of the room, and out of the house, and made haste to her own home, in a condition of mind to which fortune without guilt cannot, I believe, reduce any one.

Indeed, how much the superiority of misery is on the side of wickedness may appear to every reader who will compare the present situation of Amelia with that of Mrs. Ellison. Fortune had attacked the former with almost the highest degree of her malice. She was involved in a scene of most exquisite distress, and her husband, her principal comfort, torn violently from her arms; yet her sorrow, however exquisite, was all soft and tender, nor was she without many consolations. Her case, however hard, was not absolutely desperate; for scarce any

Digitized by Google

condition of fortune can be so. Art and industry, chance and friends, have often relieved the most distrest circumstances, and converted them into opulence. In all these she had hopes on this side the grave, and perfect virtue and innocence gave her the strongest assurances on the other. Whereas, in the bosom of Mrs. Ellison, all was storm and tempest; anger, revenge, fear, and pride, like so many raging furies, possessed her mind, and tortured her with disappointment and shame. Loss of reputation, which is generally irreparable, was to be her lot; loss of friends is of this the certain consequence; all on this side the grave appeared dreary and comfortless; and endless misery on the other, closed the gloomy prospect.

Hence, my worthy reader, console thyself, that however few of the other good things of life are thy lot, the best of all things, which is innocence, is always within thy own power; and, though Fortune may make thee often unhappy, she can never make thee completely and irreparably miserable without thy own consent.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER FOUR

CONTAINING, AMONG MANY MATTERS, THE EXEMPLARY BEHAVIOUR OF COLONEL JAMES.

WHEN Mrs. Ellison was departed, Mrs. Atkinson began to apply all her art to soothe and comfort Amelia, but was presently prevented by her. "I am ashamed, dear madam," said Amelia, "of having indulged my affliction so much at your expense. The suddenness of the occasion is my only excuse; for, had I had time to summon my resolution to my assistance, I hope I am mistress of more patience than you have hitherto seen me exert. I know, madam, in my unwarrantable excesses, I have been guilty of many transgressions. First, against that Divine will and pleasure without whose permission, at least, no human accident can happen; in the next place, madam, if anything can aggravate such a fault, I have transgressed the laws of friendship as well as decency, in throwing upon you some part of the load of my grief; and again, I have sinned against common sense, which should teach me, instead of weakly and heavily lamenting my misfortunes, to rouse all my spirits to remove them. In this light I am shocked at my own folly, and am resolved to leave my children under your care, and

Digitized by Google

go directly to my husband. I may comfort him. I may assist him. I may relieve him. There is nothing now too difficult for me to undertake."

Mrs. Atkinson greatly approved and complimented her friend on all the former part of her speech, except what related to herself, on which she spoke very civilly, and I believe with great truth; but as to her determination of going to her husband she endeavoured to dissuade her, at least she begged her to defer it for the present, and till the serjeant returned home. She then reminded Amelia that it was now past five in the afternoon, and that she had not taken any refreshment but a dish of tea the whole day, and desired she would give her leave to procure her a chick, or anything she liked better, for her dinner.

Amelia thanked her friend, and said she would sit down with her to whatever she pleased; "but if I do not eat," said she, "I would not have you impute it to anything but want of appetite; for I assure you all things are equally indifferent to me. I am more solicitous about these poor little things, who have not been used to fast so long. Heaven knows what may hereafter be their fate!"

Mrs. Atkinson bid her hope the best, and then recommended the children to the care of her maid.

And now arrived a servant from Mrs. James, with an invitation to Captain Booth and to his lady to dine with the colonel the day after the next. This a little perplexed Amelia; but after a short consideration she despatched an answer to Mrs. James, in which she concisely informed her of what had happened.

Digitized by Google

The honest serjeant, who had been on his legs almost the whole day, now returned, and brought Amelia a short letter from her husband, in which he gave her the most solemn assurances of his health and spirits, and begged her with great earnestness to take care to preserve her own, which if she did, he said, he had no doubt but that they should shortly be happy. He added something of hopes from my lord, with which Mrs. Ellison had amused him, and which served only to destroy the comfort that Amelia received from the rest of his letter.

Whilst Amelia, the serjeant, and his lady, were engaged in a cold collation, for which purpose a cold chicken was procured from the tavern for the ladies, and two pound of cold beef for the serjeant, a violent knocking was heard at the door, and presently afterwards Colonel James entered the room. After proper compliments had past, the colonel told Amelia that her letter was brought to Mrs. James while they were at table, and that on her shewing it him he had immediately rose up, made an apology to his company, and took a chair to her. He spoke to her with great tenderness on the occasion, and desired her to make herself easy; assuring her that he would leave nothing in his power undone to serve her husband. He then gave her an invitation, in his wife's name, to his own house, in the most pressing manner.

Amelia returned him very hearty thanks for all his kind offers, but begged to decline that of an apartment in his house. She said, as she could not leave her children, so neither could she think of bringing such a trouble with her into his family; and, though

Digitized by Google

the colonel gave her many assurances that her children, as well as herself, would be very welcome to Mrs. James, and even betook himself to entreaties, she still persisted obstinately in her refusal.

In real truth, Amelia had taken a vast affection for Mrs. Atkinson, of the comfort of whose company she could not bear to be deprived in her distress, nor to exchange it for that of Mrs. James, to whom she had lately conceived no little dislike.

The colonel, when he found he could not prevail with Amelia to accept his invitation, desisted from any farther solicitations. He then took a bank-bill of fifty pounds from his pocket-book, and said, "You will pardon me, dear madam, if I chuse to impute your refusal of my house rather to a dislike of my wife, who I will not pretend to be the most agreeable of women (all men," said he, sighing, "have not Captain Booth's fortune), than to any aversion or anger to me. I must insist upon it, therefore, to make your present habitation as easy to you as possible — I hope, madam, you will not deny me this happiness; I beg you will honour me with the acceptance of this trifle." He then put the note into her hand, and declared that the honour of touching it was worth a hundred times that sum.

"I protest, Colonel James," cried Amelia, blushing, "I know not what to do or say, your goodness so greatly confounds me. Can I, who am so well acquainted with the many great obligations Mr. Booth already hath to your generosity, consent that you should add more to a debt we never can pay?"

The colonel stopt her short, protesting that she

Digitized by Google

misplaced the obligation; for, that if to confer the highest happiness was to oblige, he was obliged to her acceptance. "And I do assure you, madam," said he, "if this trifling sum or a much larger can contribute to your ease, I shall consider myself as the happiest man upon earth in being able to supply it, and you, madam, my greatest benefactor in receiving it."

Amelia then put the note in her pocket, and they entered into a conversation in which many civil things were said on both sides; but what was chiefly worth remark was, that Amelia had almost her husband constantly in her mouth, and the colonel never mentioned him: the former seemed desirous to lay all obligations, as much as possible, to the account of her husband; and the latter endeavoured, with the utmost delicacy, to insinuate that her happiness was the main and indeed only point which he had in view.

Amelia had made no doubt, at the colonel's first appearance, but that he intended to go directly to her husband. When he dropt therefore a hint of his intention to visit him next morning she appeared visibly shocked at the delay. The colonel, perceiving this, said, "However inconvenient it may be, yet, madam, if it will oblige you, or if you desire it, I will even go to-night." Amelia answered, "My husband will be far from desiring to derive any good from your inconvenience; but, if you put it to me, I must be excused for saying I desire nothing more in the world than to send him so great a comfort as I know he will receive from the presence of such a friend." "Then, to show you, madam," cries the colonel,

Digitized by Google

"that I desire nothing more in the world than to give you pleasure, I will go to him immediately."

Amelia then bethought herself of the serjeant, and told the colonel his old acquaintance Atkinson, whom he had known at Gibraltar, was then in the house, and would conduct him to the place. The serjeant was immediately called in, paid his respects to the colonel, and was acknowledged by him. They both immediately set forward, Amelia to the utmost of her power pressing their departure.

Mrs. Atkinson now returned to Amelia, and was by her acquainted with the colonel's late generosity; for her heart so boiled over with gratitude that she could not conceal the ebullition. Amelia likewise gave her friend a full narrative of the colonel's former behaviour and friendship to her husband, as well abroad as in England; and ended with declaring that she believed him to be the most generous man upon earth.

Mrs. Atkinson agreed with Amelia's conclusion, and said she was glad to hear there was any such man. They then proceeded with the children to the tea-table, where panegyric, and not scandal, was the topic of their conversation; and of this panegyric the colonel was the subject; both the ladies seeming to vie with each other in celebrating the praises of his goodness.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER FIVE

COMMENTS UPON AUTHORS.

HAVING left Amelia in as comfortable a situation as could possibly be expected, her immediate distresses relieved, and her heart filled with great hopes from the friendship of the colonel, we will now return to Booth, who, when the attorney and serjeant had left him, received a visit from that great author of whom honourable mention is made in our second chapter.

Booth, as the reader may be pleased to remember, was a pretty good master of the classics; for his father, though he designed his son for the army, did not think it necessary to breed him up a blockhead. He did not, perhaps, imagine that a competent share of Latin and Greek would make his son either a pedant or a coward. He considered likewise, probably, that the life of a soldier is in general a life of idleness; and might think that the spare hours of an officer in country quarters would be as well employed with a book as in sauntering about the streets, loitering in a coffee-house, sotting in a tavern, or in laying schemes to debauch and ruin a set of harmless ignorant country girls.

As Booth was therefore what might well be called, in this age at least, a man of learning, he began to

Digitized by Google

discourse our author on subjects of literature. "I think, sir," says he, "that Dr. Swift hath been generally allowed, by the critics in this kingdom, to be the greatest master of humour that ever wrote. Indeed, I allow him to have possessed most admirable talents of this kind; and, if Rabelais was his master, I think he proves the truth of the common Greek proverb — that the scholar is often superior to the master. As to Cervantes, I do not think we can make any just comparison; for, though Mr. Pope compliments him with sometimes taking Cervantes' serious air —" "I remember the passage," cries the author;

> "O thou, whatever title please thine ear,
> Dean, Drapier, Bickerstaff, or Gulliver;
> Whether you take Cervantes' serious air,
> Or laugh and shake in Rabelais' easy chair —"

"You are right, sir," said Booth; "but though I should agree that the doctor hath sometimes condescended to imitate Rabelais, I do not remember to have seen in his works the least attempt in the manner of Cervantes. But there is one in his own way, and whom I am convinced he studied above all others — you guess, I believe, I am going to name Lucian. This author, I say, I am convinced, he followed; but I think he followed him at a distance: as, to say the truth, every other writer of this kind hath done in my opinion; for none, I think, hath yet equalled him. I agree, indeed, entirely with Mr. Moyle, in his Discourse on the age of the Philopatris, when he gives him the epithet of the incomparable Lucian; and incomparable, I believe, he

Digitized by Google

will remain as long as the language in which he wrote shall endure. What an inimitable piece of humour is his Cock!" "I remember it very well," cries the author; "his story of a Cock and a Bull is excellent." Booth stared at this, and asked the author what he meant by the Bull? "Nay," answered he, "I don't know very well, upon my soul. It is a long time since I read him. I learnt him all over at school; I have not read him much since. And pray, sir," said he, "how do you like his Pharsalia? don't you think Mr. Rowe's translation a very fine one?" Booth replied, "I believe we are talking of different authors. The Pharsalia, which Mr. Rowe translated, was written by Lucan; but I have been speaking of Lucian, a Greek writer, and, in my opinion, the greatest in the humorous way that ever the world produced." "Ay!" cries the author, "he was indeed so, a very excellent writer indeed! I fancy a translation of him would sell very well!" "I do not know, indeed," cries Booth. "A good translation of him would be a valuable book. I have seen a wretched one published by Mr. Dryden, but translated by others, who in many places have misunderstood Lucian's meaning, and have nowhere preserved the spirit of the original." "That is great pity," says the author. "Pray, sir, is he well translated in the French?" Booth answered, he could not tell; but that he doubted it very much, having never seen a good version into that language out of the Greek. "To confess the truth, I believe," said he, "the French translators have generally consulted the Latin only; which, in some of the few

Digitized by Google

Greek writers I have read, is intolerably bad. And as the English translators, for the most part, pursue the French, we may easily guess what spirit those copies of bad copies must preserve of the original."

"Egad, you are a shrewd guesser," cries the author. "I am glad the booksellers have not your sagacity. But how should it be otherwise, considering the price they pay by the sheet? The Greek, you will allow, is a hard language; and there are few gentlemen that write who can read it without a good lexicon. Now, sir, if we were to afford time to find out the true meaning of words, a gentleman would not get bread and cheese by his work. If one was to be paid, indeed, as Mr. Pope was for his Homer — Pray, sir, don't you think that the best translation in the world?"

"Indeed, sir," cries Booth, "I think, though it is certainly a noble paraphrase, and of itself a fine poem, yet in some places it is no translation at all. In the very beginning, for instance, he hath not rendered the true force of the author. Homer invokes his muse in the five first lines of the Iliad; and, at the end of the fifth, he gives his reason:

Διὸς δ' ἐτελείετο βουλή.

For all these things," says he, "were brought about by the decree of Jupiter; and, therefore, he supposes their true sources are known only to the deities. Now, the translation takes no more notice of the ΔΕ than if no such word had been there."

"Very possibly," answered the author; "it is a

Digitized by Google

long time since I read the original. Perhaps, then, he followed the French translations. I observe, indeed, he talks much in the notes of Madam Dacier and Monsieur Eustathius."

Booth had now received conviction enough of his friend's knowledge of the Greek language; without attempting, therefore, to set him right, he made a sudden transition to the Latin. "Pray, sir," said he, "as you have mentioned Rowe's translation of the Pharsalia, do you remember how he hath rendered that passage in the character of Cato? —

———Venerisque huic maximus usus
Progenies; urbi Pater est, urbique Maritus.

For I apprehend that passage is generally misunderstood."

"I really do not remember," answered the author. "Pray, sir, what do you take to be the meaning?"

"I apprehend, sir," replied Booth, "that by these words, *Urbi Pater est, urbique Maritus*, Cato is represented as the father and husband to the city of Rome."

"Very true, sir," cries the author; "very fine, indeed. — Not only the father of his country, but the husband too; very noble, truly!"

"Pardon me, sir," cries Booth; "I do not conceive that to have been Lucan's meaning. If you please to observe the context; Lucan, having commended the temperance of Cato in the instances of diet and cloaths, proceeds to venereal pleasures; of which, says the poet, his principal use was procreation: then he adds, *Urbi Pater est, urbique Mari-*

Digitized by Google

tus; that he became a father and a husband for the sake only of the city."

"Upon my word that's true," cries the author; "I did not think of it. It is much finer than the other. — *Urbis Pater est* — what is the other? — ay — *Urbis Maritus.* — It is certainly as you say, sir."

Booth was by this pretty well satisfied of the author's profound learning; however, he was willing to try him a little farther. He asked him, therefore, what was his opinion of Lucan in general, and in what class of writers he ranked him?

The author stared a little at this question; and, after some hesitation, answered, "Certainly, sir, I think he is a fine writer and a very great poet."

"I am very much of the same opinion," cries Booth; "but where do you class him — next to what poet do you place him?"

"Let me see," cries the author; "where do I class him? next to whom do I place him? — Ay! — why — why, pray, where do you yourself place him?"

"Why, surely," cries Booth, "if he is not to be placed in the first rank with Homer, and Virgil, and Milton, I think clearly he is at the head of the second, before either Statius or Silius Italicus — though I allow to each of these their merits; but, perhaps, an epic poem was beyond the genius of either. I own, I have often thought, if Statius had ventured no farther than Ovid or Claudian, he would have succeeded better; for his Sylvæ are, in my opinion, much better than his Thebaïs."

"I believe I was of the same opinion formerly," said the author.

Digitized by Google

"And for what reason have you altered it?" cries Booth.

"I have not altered it," answered the author; "but, to tell you the truth, I have not any opinion at all about these matters at present. I do not trouble my head much with poetry; for there is no encouragement to such studies in this age. It is true, indeed, I have now and then wrote a poem or two for the magazines, but I never intend to write any more; for a gentleman is not paid for his time. A sheet is a sheet with the booksellers; and, whether it be in prose or verse, they make no difference; though certainly there is as much difference to a gentleman in the work as there is to a taylor between making a plain and a laced suit. Rhimes are difficult things; they are stubborn things, sir. I have been sometimes longer in tagging a couplet than I have been in writing a speech on the side of the opposition which hath been read with great applause all over the kingdom."

"I am glad you are pleased to confirm that," cries Booth; "for I protest it was an entire secret to me till this day. I was so perfectly ignorant, that I thought the speeches published in the magazines were really made by the members themselves."

"Some of them, and I believe I may, without vanity, say the best," cries the author, "are all the productions of my own pen! but I believe I shall leave it off soon, unless a sheet of speech will fetch more than it does at present. In truth, the romance-writing is the only branch of our business now that is worth following. Goods of that sort have had so

Digitized by Google

much success lately in the market, that a bookseller scarce cares what he bids for them. And it is certainly the easiest work in the world; you may write it almost as fast as you can set pen to paper; and if you interlard it with a little scandal, a little abuse on some living characters of note, you cannot fail of success."

"Upon my word, sir," cries Booth, "you have greatly instructed me. I could not have imagined there had been so much regularity in the trade of writing as you are pleased to mention; by what I can perceive, the pen and ink is likely to become the staple commodity of the kingdom."

"Alas! sir," answered the author, "it is overstocked. The market is overstocked. There is no encouragement to merit, no patrons. I have been these five years soliciting a subscription for my new translation of Ovid's Metamorphoses, with notes explanatory, historical, and critical; and I have scarce collected five hundred names yet."

The mention of this translation a little surprized Booth; not only as the author had just declared his intentions to forsake the tuneful muses; but for some other reasons which he had collected from his conversation with our author, he little expected to hear of a proposal to translate any of the Latin poets. He proceeded, therefore, to catechise him a little farther; and by his answers was fully satisfied that he had the very same acquaintance with Ovid that he had appeared to have with Lucan.

The author then pulled out a bundle of papers containing proposals for his subscription, and re-

Digitized by Google

ceipts; and, addressing himself to Booth, said, "Though the place in which we meet, sir, is an improper place to solicit favours of this kind, yet, perhaps, it may be in your power to serve me if you will charge your pockets with some of these." Booth was just offering at an excuse, when the bailiff introduced Colonel James and the serjeant.

The unexpected visit of a beloved friend to a man in affliction, especially in Mr. Booth's situation, is a comfort which can scarce be equalled; not barely from the hopes of relief or redress by his assistance, but as it is an evidence of sincere friendship which scarce admits of any doubt or suspicion. Such an instance doth indeed make a man amends for all ordinary troubles and distresses; and we ought to think ourselves gainers by having had such an opportunity of discovering that we are possessed of one of the most valuable of all human possessions.

Booth was so transported at the sight of the colonel, that he dropt the proposals which the author had put into his hands, and burst forth into the highest professions of gratitude to his friend; who behaved very properly on his side, and said everything which became the mouth of a friend on the occasion.

It is true, indeed, he seemed not moved equally either with Booth or the serjeant, both whose eyes watered at the scene. In truth, the colonel, though a very generous man, had not the least grain of tenderness in his disposition. His mind was formed of those firm materials of which nature formerly hammered out the Stoic, and upon which the sorrows of

Digitized by Google

no man living could make an impression. A man of this temper, who doth not much value danger, will fight for the person he calls his friend, and the man that hath but little value for his money will give it him; but such friendship is never to be absolutely depended on; for, whenever the favourite passion interposes with it, it is sure to subside and vanish into air. Whereas the man whose tender disposition really feels the miseries of another will endeavour to relieve them for his own sake; and, in such a mind, friendship will often get the superiority over every other passion.

But, from whatever motive it sprung, the colonel's behaviour to Booth seemed truly amiable; and so it appeared to the author, who took the first occasion to applaud it in a very florid oration; which the reader, when he recollects that he was a speech-maker by profession, will not be surprized at; nor, perhaps, will be much more surprized that he soon after took an occasion of clapping a proposal into the colonel's hands, holding at the same time a receipt very visible in his own.

The colonel received both, and gave the author a guinea in exchange, which was double the sum mentioned in the receipt; for which the author made a low bow, and very politely took his leave, saying, "I suppose, gentlemen, you may have some private business together; I heartily wish a speedy end to your confinement, and I congratulate you on the possessing so great, so noble, and so generous a friend."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER SIX

WHICH INCLINES RATHER TO SATIRE THAN PANEGYRIC.

THE colonel had the curiosity to ask Booth the name of the gentleman who, in the vulgar language, had struck, or taken him in for a guinea with so much ease and dexterity. Booth answered, he did not know his name; all that he knew of him was, that he was the most impudent and illiterate fellow he had ever seen, and that, by his own account, he was the author of most of the wonderful productions of the age. "Perhaps," said he, "it may look uncharitable in me to blame you for your generosity; but I am convinced the fellow hath not the least merit or capacity, and you have subscribed to the most horrid trash that ever was published."

"I care not a farthing what he publishes," cries the colonel. "Heaven forbid I should be obliged to read half the nonsense I have subscribed to."

"But don't you think," said Booth, "that by such indiscriminate encouragement of authors you do a real mischief to the society? By propagating the subscriptions of such fellows, people are tired out and withhold their contributions to men of real merit; and, at the same time, you are contributing to fill the world, not only with nonsense, but with all the

Digitized by Google

scurrility, indecency, and profaneness with which the age abounds, and with which all bad writers supply the defect of genius."

"Pugh!" cries the colonel, "I never consider these matters. Good or bad, it is all one to me; but there's an acquaintance of mine, and a man of great wit too, that thinks the worst the best, as they are the surest to make him laugh."

"I ask pardon, sir," says the serjeant; "but I wish your honour would consider your own affairs a little, for it grows late in the evening."

"The serjeant says true," answered the colonel. "What is it you intend to do?"

"Faith, colonel, I know not what I shall do. My affairs seem so irreparable, that I have been driving them as much as possibly I could from my mind. If I was to suffer alone, I think I could bear them with some philosophy; but when I consider who are to be the sharers in my fortune — the dearest of children, and the best, the worthiest, and the noblest of women —— Pardon me, my dear friend, these sensations are above me; they convert me into a woman; they drive me to despair, to madness."

The colonel advised him to command himself, and told him this was not the way to retrieve his fortune. "As to me, my dear Booth," said he, "you know you may command me as far as is really within my power."

Booth answered eagerly, that he was so far from expecting any more favours from the colonel, that he had resolved not to let him know anything of his misfortune. "No, my dear friend," cries he, "I am

Digitized by Google

too much obliged to you already;" and then burst into many fervent expressions of gratitude, till the colonel himself stopt him, and begged him to give an account of the debt or debts for which he was detained in that horrid place.

Booth answered, he could not be very exact, but he feared it was upwards of four hundred pounds.

"It is but three hundred pounds, indeed, sir," cries the serjeant; "if you can raise three hundred pounds, you are a free man this moment."

Booth, who did not apprehend the generous meaning of the serjeant as well as, I believe, the reader will, answered he was mistaken; that he had computed his debts, and they amounted to upwards of four hundred pounds; nay, that the bailiff had shewn him writs for above that sum.

"Whether your debts are three or four hundred," cries the colonel, "the present business is to give bail only, and then you will have some time to try your friends: I think you might get a company abroad, and then I would advance the money on the security of half your pay; and, in the mean time, I will be one of your bail with all my heart."

Whilst Booth poured forth his gratitude for all this kindness, the serjeant ran down-stairs for the bailiff, and shortly after returned with him into the room.

The bailiff, being informed that the colonel offered to be bail for his prisoner, answered a little surlily, "Well, sir, and who will be the other? you know, I suppose, there must be two; and I must have time to enquire after them."

Digitized by Google

The colonel replied, "I believe, sir, I am well known to be responsible for a much larger sum than your demand on this gentleman; but, if your forms require two, I suppose the serjeant here will do for the other."

"I don't know the serjeant nor you either, sir," cries Bondum; "and, if you propose yourselves bail for the gentleman, I must have time to enquire after you."

"You need very little time to enquire after me," says the colonel, "for I can send for several of the law, whom I suppose you know, to satisfy you; but consider, it is very late."

"Yes, sir," answered Bondum, "I do consider it is too late for the captain to be bailed to-night."

"What do you mean by too late?" cries the colonel.

"I mean, sir, that I must search the office, and that is now shut up; for, if my lord mayor and the court of aldermen would be bound for him, I would not discharge him till I had searched the office."

"How, sir!" cries the colonel, "hath the law of England no more regard for the liberty of the subject than to suffer such fellows as you to detain a man in custody for debt, when he can give undeniable security?"

"Don't fellow me," said the bailiff; "I am as good a fellow as yourself, I believe, though you have that riband in your hat there."

"Do you know whom you are speaking to?" said the serjeant. "Do you know you are talking to a colonel of the army?"

Digitized by Google

"What 's a colonel of the army to me?" cries the bailiff. "I have had as good as he in my custody before now."

"And a member of parliament?" cries the serjeant.

"Is the gentleman a member of parliament? — Well, and what harm have I said? I am sure I meant no harm; and, if his honour is offended, I ask his pardon; to be sure his honour must know that the sheriff is answerable for all the writs in the office, though they were never so many, and I am answerable to the sheriff. I am sure the captain can't say that I have shewn him any manner of incivility since he hath been here. — And I hope, honourable sir," cries he, turning to the colonel, "you don't take anything amiss that I said, or meant by way of disrespect, or any such matter. I did not, indeed, as the gentleman here says, know who I was speaking to; but I did not say anything uncivil as I know of, and I hope no offence."

The colonel was more easily pacified than might have been expected, and told the bailiff that, if it was against the rules of law to discharge Mr. Booth that evening, he must be contented. He then addressed himself to his friend, and began to prescribe comfort and patience to him; saying, he must rest satisfied with his confinement that night; and the next morning he promised to visit him again.

Booth answered, that as for himself, the lying one night in any place was very little worth his regard. "You and I, my dear friend, have both spent our evening in a worse situation than I shall in this house. All my concern is for my poor Amelia,

Digitized by Google

whose sufferings on account of my absence I know, and I feel with unspeakable tenderness. Could I be assured she was tolerably easy, I could be contented in chains or in a dungeon."

"Give yourself no concern on her account," said the colonel; "I will wait on her myself, though I break an engagement for that purpose, and will give her such assurances as I am convinced will make her perfectly easy."

Booth embraced his friend, and, weeping over him, paid his acknowledgment with tears for all his goodness. In words, indeed, he was not able to thank him; for gratitude, joining with his other passions, almost choaked him, and stopt his utterance.

After a short scene in which nothing past worth recounting, the colonel bid his friend good night, and leaving the serjeant with him, made the best of his way back to Amelia.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER SEVEN

WORTHY A VERY SERIOUS PERUSAL.

THE colonel found Amelia sitting very disconsolate with Mrs. Atkinson. He entered the room with an air of great gaiety, assured Amelia that her husband was perfectly well, and that he hoped the next day he would again be with her.

Amelia was a little comforted at this account, and vented many grateful expressions to the colonel for his unparalleled friendship, as she was pleased to call it. She could not, however, help giving way soon after to a sigh at the thoughts of her husband's bondage, and declared that night would be the longest she had ever known.

"This lady, madam," cries the colonel, "must endeavour to make it shorter. And, if you will give me leave, I will join in the same endeavour." Then, after some more consolatory speeches, the colonel attempted to give a gay turn to the discourse, and said, "I was engaged to have spent this evening disagreeably at Ranelagh, with a set of company I did not like. How vastly am I obliged to you, dear Mrs. Booth, that I pass it so infinitely more to my satisfaction!"

Digitized by Google

"Indeed, colonel," said Amelia, "I am convinced that to a mind so rightly turned as yours there must be a much sweeter relish in the highest offices of friendship than in any pleasures which the gayest public places can afford."

"Upon my word, madam," said the colonel, "you now do me more than justice. I have, and always had, the utmost indifference for such pleasures. Indeed, I hardly allow them worthy of that name, or, if they are so at all, it is in a very low degree. In my opinion the highest friendship must always lead us to the highest pleasure."

Here Amelia entered into a long dissertation on friendship, in which she pointed several times directly at the colonel as the heroe of her tale.

The colonel highly applauded all her sentiments; and when he could not avoid taking the compliment to himself, he received it with a most respectful bow. He then tried his hand likewise at description, in which he found means to repay all Amelia's panegyric in kind. This, though he did with all possible delicacy, yet a curious observer might have been apt to suspect that it was chiefly on her account that the colonel had avoided the masquerade.

In discourses of this kind they passed the evening, till it was very late, the colonel never offering to stir from his chair before the clock had struck one; when he thought, perhaps, that decency obliged him to take his leave.

As soon as he was gone Mrs. Atkinson said to Mrs. Booth, "I think, madam, you told me this afternoon that the colonel was married?"

Digitized by Google

Amelia answered, she did so.

"I think likewise, madam," said Mrs. Atkinson, "you was acquainted with the colonel's lady?"

Amelia answered that she had been extremely intimate with her abroad.

"Is she young and handsome?" said Mrs. Atkinson. "In short, pray, was it a match of love or convenience?"

Amelia answered, entirely of love, she believed, on his side; for that the lady had little or no fortune.

"I am very glad to hear it," said Mrs. Atkinson; "for I am sure the colonel is in love with somebody. I think I never saw a more luscious picture of love drawn than that which he was pleased to give us as the portraiture of friendship. I have read, indeed, of Pylades and Orestes, Damon and Pythias, and other great friends of old; nay, I sometimes flatter myself that I am capable of being a friend myself; but as for that fine, soft, tender, delicate passion, which he was pleased to describe, I am convinced there must go a he and a she to the composition."

"Upon my word, my dear, you are mistaken," cries Amelia. "If you had known the friendship which hath always subsisted between the colonel and my husband, you would not imagine it possible for any description to exceed it. Nay, I think his behaviour this very day is sufficient to convince you."

"I own what he hath done to-day hath great merit," said Mrs. Atkinson; "and yet, from what he hath said to-night — You will pardon me, dear madam; perhaps I am too quick-sighted in my observations; nay, I am afraid I am even impertinent."

Digitized by Google

"Fie upon it!" cries Amelia; "how can you talk in that strain? Do you imagine I expect ceremony? Pray speak what you think with the utmost freedom."

"Did he not then," said Mrs. Atkinson, "repeat the words, *the finest woman in the world*, more than once? did he not make use of an expression which might have become the mouth of Oroöndates himself? If I remember, the words were these — that, had he been Alexander the Great, he should have thought it more glory to have wiped off a tear from the bright eyes of Statira than to have conquered fifty worlds."

"Did he say so?" cries Amelia — "I think he did say something like it; but my thoughts were so full of my husband that I took little notice. But what would you infer from what he said? I hope you don't think he is in love with me?"

"I hope he doth not think so himself," answered Mrs. Atkinson; "though, when he mentioned the bright eyes of Statira, he fixed his own eyes on yours with the most languishing air I ever beheld."

Amelia was going to answer, when the serjeant arrived, and then she immediately fell to enquiring after her husband, and received such satisfactory answers to all her many questions concerning him, that she expressed great pleasure. These ideas so possessed her mind, that, without once casting her thoughts on any other matters, she took her leave of the serjeant and his lady, and repaired to bed to her children, in a room which Mrs. Atkinson had provided her in the same house; where we will at present wish her a good night.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONSISTING OF GRAVE MATTERS.

WHILE innocence and chearful hope, in spite of the malice of fortune, closed the eyes of the gentle Amelia on her homely bed, and she enjoyed a sweet and profound sleep, the colonel lay restless all night on his down; his mind was affected with a kind of ague fit; sometimes scorched up with flaming desires, and again chilled with the coldest despair.

There is a time, I think, according to one of our poets, *when lust and envy sleep.* This, I suppose, is when they are well gorged with the food they most delight in; but, while either of these are hungry,

> Nor poppy, nor mandragora,
> Nor all the drousy syrups of the East,
> Will ever medicine them to slumber.

The colonel was at present unhappily tormented by both these fiends. His last evening's conversation with Amelia had done his business effectually. The many kind words she had spoken to him, the many kind looks she had given him, as being, she conceived, the friend and preserver of her husband, had made an entire conquest of his heart. Thus the very love which she bore him, as the person to whom

Digitized by Google

her little family were to owe their preservation and happiness, inspired him with thoughts of sinking them all in the lowest abyss of ruin and misery; and, while she smiled with all her sweetness on the supposed friend of her husband, she was converting that friend into his most bitter enemy.

> **Friendship, take heed; if woman interfere,**
> **Be sure the hour of thy destruction 's near.**

These are the lines of Vanbrugh; and the sentiment is better than the poetry. To say the truth, as a handsome wife is the cause and cement of many false friendships, she is often too liable to destroy the real ones.

Thus the object of the colonel's lust very plainly appears, but the object of his envy may be more difficult to discover. Nature and Fortune had seemed to strive with a kind of rivalship which should bestow most on the colonel. The former had given him person, parts, and constitution, in all which he was superior to almost every other man. The latter had given him rank in life, and riches, both in a very eminent degree. Whom then should this happy man envy? Here, lest ambition should mislead the reader to search the palaces of the great, we will direct him at once to Gray's-inn-lane; where, in a miserable bed, in a miserable room, he will see a miserable broken lieutenant, in a miserable condition, with several heavy debts on his back, and without a penny in his pocket. This, and no other, was the object of the colonel's envy. And why? because this wretch was possessed of the affections of a poor little lamb,

Digitized by Google

which all the vast flocks that were within the power and reach of the colonel could not prevent that glutton's longing for. And sure this image of the lamb is not improperly adduced on this occasion; for what was the colonel's desire but to lead this poor lamb, as it were, to the slaughter, in order to purchase a feast of a few days by her final destruction, and to tear her away from the arms of one where she was sure of being fondled and caressed all the days of her life.

While the colonel was agitated with these thoughts, his greatest comfort was, that Amelia and Booth were now separated; and his greatest terror was of their coming again together. From wishes, therefore, he began to meditate designs; and so far was he from any intention of procuring the liberty of his friend, that he began to form schemes of prolonging his confinement, till he could procure some means of sending him away far from her; in which case he doubted not but of succeeding in all he desired.

He was forming this plan in his mind when a servant informed him that one serjeant Atkinson desired to speak with his honour. The serjeant was immediately admitted, and acquainted the colonel that, if he pleased to go and become bail for Mr. Booth, another unexceptionable housekeeper would be there to join with him. This person the serjeant had procured that morning, and had, by leave of his wife, given him a bond of indemnification for the purpose.

The colonel did not seem so elated with this news as Atkinson expected. On the contrary, instead of making a direct answer to what Atkinson said, the

Digitized by Google

colonel began thus: "I think, serjeant, Mr. Booth hath told me that you was foster-brother to his lady. She is really a charming woman, and it is a thousand pities she should ever have been placed in the dreadful situation she is now in. There is nothing so silly as for subaltern officers of the army to marry, unless where they meet with women of very great fortunes indeed. What can be the event of their marrying otherwise, but entailing misery and beggary on their wives and their posterity?"

"Ah! sir," cries the serjeant, "it is too late to think of those matters now. To be sure, my lady might have married one of the top gentlemen in the country; for she is certainly one of the best as well as one of the handsomest women in the kingdom; and, if she had been fairly dealt by, would have had a very great fortune into the bargain. Indeed, she is worthy of the greatest prince in the world; and, if I had been the greatest prince in the world, I should have thought myself happy with such a wife; but she was pleased to like the lieutenant, and certainly there can be no happiness in marriage without liking."

"Lookee, serjeant," said the colonel; "you know very well that I am the lieutenant's friend. I think I have shewn myself so."

"Indeed your honour hath," quoth the serjeant, "more than once to my knowledge."

"But I am angry with him for his imprudence, greatly angry with him for his imprudence; and the more so, as it affects a lady of so much worth."

"She is, indeed, a lady of the highest worth,"

Digitized by Google

cries the serjeant. "Poor dear lady! I knew her, an't please your honour, from her infancy; and the sweetest-tempered, best-natured lady she is that ever trod on English ground. I have always loved her as if she was my own sister. Nay, she hath very often called me brother; and I have taken it to be a greater honour than if I was to be called a general officer."

"What pity it is," said the colonel, "that this worthy creature should be exposed to so much misery by the thoughtless behaviour of a man who, though I am his friend, I cannot help saying, hath been guilty of imprudence at least! Why could he not live upon his half-pay? What had he to do to run himself into debt in this outrageous manner?"

"I wish, indeed," cries the serjeant, "he had been a little more considerative; but I hope this will be a warning to him."

"How am I sure of that," answered the colonel; "or what reason is there to expect it? extravagance is a vice of which men are not so easily cured. I have thought a great deal of this matter, Mr. serjeant; and, upon the most mature deliberation, I am of opinion that it will be better, both for him and his poor lady, that he should smart a little more."

"Your honour, sir, to be sure is in the right," replied the serjeant; "but yet, sir, if you will pardon me for speaking, I hope you will be pleased to consider my poor lady's case. She suffers, all this while, as much or more than the lieutenant; for I know her so well, that I am certain she will never

Digitized by Google

have a moment's ease till her husband is out of confinement."

"I know women better than you, serjeant," cries the colonel; "they sometimes place their affections on a husband as children do on their nurse; but they are both to be weaned. I know you, serjeant, to be a fellow of sense as well as spirit, or I should not speak so freely to you; but I took a fancy to you a long time ago, and I intend to serve you; but first, I ask you this question — Is your attachment to Mr. Booth or his lady?"

"Certainly, sir," said the serjeant, "I must love my lady best. Not but I have a great affection for the lieutenant too, because I know my lady hath the same; and, indeed, he hath been always very good to me as far as was in his power. A lieutenant, your honour knows, can't do a great deal; but I have always found him my friend upon all occasions."

"You say true," cries the colonel; "a lieutenant can do but little; but I can do much to serve you, and will too. But let me ask you one question: Who was the lady whom I saw last night with Mrs. Booth at her lodgings?"

Here the serjeant blushed, and repeated, "The lady, sir?"

"Ay, a lady, a woman," cries the colonel, "who supped with us last night. She looked rather too much like a gentlewoman for the mistress of a lodging-house."

The serjeant's cheeks glowed at this compliment to his wife; and he was just going to own her when the colonel proceeded: "I think I never saw in my life

Digitized by Google

so ill-looking, sly, demure a b— ; I would give something, methinks, to know who she was."

"I don't know, indeed," cries the serjeant, in great confusion; "I know nothing about her."

"I wish you would enquire," said the colonel, "and let me know her name, and likewise what she is: I have a strange curiosity to know, and let me see you again this evening exactly at seven."

"And will not your honour then go to the lieutenant this morning?" said Atkinson.

"It is not in my power," answered the colonel; "I am engaged another way. Besides, there is no haste in this affair. If men will be imprudent they must suffer the consequences. Come to me at seven, and bring me all the particulars you can concerning that ill-looking jade I mentioned to you, for I am resolved to know who she is. And so good-morrow to you, serjeant; be assured I will take an opportunity to do something for you."

Though some readers may, perhaps, think the serjeant not unworthy of the freedom with which the colonel treated him; yet that haughty officer would have been very backward to have condescended to such familiarity with one of his rank had he not proposed some design from it. In truth, he began to conceive hopes of making the serjeant instrumental to his design on Amelia; in other words, to convert him into a pimp; an office in which the colonel had been served by Atkinson's betters, and which, as he knew it was in his power very well to reward him, he had no apprehension that the serjeant would decline — an opinion which the serjeant might have par-

Digitized by Google

doned, though he had never given the least grounds for it, since the colonel borrowed it from the knowledge of his own heart. This dictated to him that he, from a bad motive, was capable of desiring to debauch his friend's wife; and the same heart inspired him to hope that another, from another bad motive, might be guilty of the same breach of friendship in assisting him. Few men, I believe, think better of others than of themselves; nor do they easily allow the existence of any virtue of which they perceive no traces in their own minds; for which reason I have observed, that it is extremely difficult to persuade a rogue that you are an honest man; nor would you ever succeed in the attempt by the strongest evidence, was it not for the comfortable conclusion which the rogue draws, that he who proves himself to be honest proves himself to be a fool at the same time.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER NINE

A CURIOUS CHAPTER, FROM WHICH A CURIOUS READER MAY DRAW SUNDRY OBSERVATIONS.

THE serjeant retired from the colonel in a very dejected state of mind: in which, however, we must leave him awhile and return to Amelia; who, as soon as she was up, had despatched Mrs. Atkinson to pay off her former lodgings, and to bring off all cloaths and other moveables.

The trusty messenger returned without performing her errand, for Mrs. Ellison had locked up all her rooms, and was gone out very early that morning, and the servant knew not whither she was gone.

The two ladies now sat down to breakfast, together with Amelia's two children; after which, Amelia declared she would take a coach and visit her husband. To this motion Mrs. Atkinson soon agreed, and offered to be her companion. To say truth, I think it was reasonable enough; and the great abhorrence which Booth had of seeing his wife in a bailiff's house was, perhaps, rather too nice and delicate.

When the ladies were both drest, and just going to send for their vehicle, a great knocking was heard

Digitized by Google

at the door, and presently Mrs. James was ushered into the room.

This visit was disagreeable enough to Amelia, as it detained her from the sight of her husband, for which she so eagerly longed. However, as she had no doubt but that the visit would be reasonably short, she resolved to receive the lady with all the complaisance in her power.

Mrs. James now behaved herself so very unlike the person that she lately appeared, that it might have surprized any one who doth not know that besides that of a fine lady, which is all mere art and mummery, every such woman hath some real character at the bottom, in which, whenever nature gets the better of her, she acts. Thus the finest ladies in the world will sometimes love, and sometimes scratch, according to their different natural dispositions, with great fury and violence, though both of these are equally inconsistent with a fine lady's artificial character.

Mrs. James then was at the bottom a very good-natured woman and the moment she heard of Amelia's misfortune was sincerely grieved at it. She had acquiesced on the very first motion with the colonel's design of inviting her to her house; and this morning at breakfast, when he had acquainted her that Amelia made some difficulty in accepting the offer, very readily undertook to go herself and persuade her friend to accept the invitation.

She now pressed this matter with such earnestness, that Amelia, who was not extremely versed in the

Digitized by Google

art of denying, was hardly able to refuse her importunity; nothing, indeed, but her affection to Mrs. Atkinson could have prevailed on her to refuse; that point, however, she would not give up, and Mrs. James, at last, was contented with a promise that, as soon as their affairs were settled, Amelia, with her husband and family, would make her a visit, and stay some time with her in the country, whither she was soon to retire.

Having obtained this promise, Mrs. James, after many very friendly professions, took her leave, and, stepping into her coach, reassumed the fine lady, and drove away to join her company at an auction.

The moment she was gone Mrs. Atkinson, who had left the room upon the approach of Mrs. James, returned into it, and was informed by Amelia of all that had past.

"Pray, madam," said Mrs. Atkinson, "do this colonel and his lady live, as it is called, well together?"

"If you mean to ask," cries Amelia, "whether they are a very fond couple, I must answer that I believe they are not."

"I have been told," says Mrs. Atkinson, "that there have been instances of women who have become bawds to their own husbands, and the husbands pimps for them."

"Fie upon it!" cries Amelia. "I hope there are no such people. Indeed, my dear, this is being a little too censorious."

"Call it what you please," answered Mrs. Atkinson; "it arises from my love to you and my fears for your danger. You know the proverb of a burnt

Digitized by Google

child; and, if such a one hath any good-nature, it will dread the fire on the account of others as well as on its own. And, if I may speak my sentiments freely, I cannot think you will be in safety at this colonel's house."

"I cannot but believe your apprehensions to be sincere," replied Amelia; "and I must think myself obliged to you for them; but I am convinced you are entirely in an error. I look on Colonel James as the most generous and best of men. He was a friend, and an excellent friend too, to my husband, long before I was acquainted with him, and he hath done him a thousand good offices. What do you say of his behaviour yesterday?"

"I wish," cries Mrs. Atkinson, "that this behaviour to-day had been equal. What I am now going to undertake is the most disagreeable office of friendship, but it is a necessary one. I must tell you, therefore, what past this morning between the colonel and Mr. Atkinson; for, though it will hurt you, you ought, on many accounts, to know it." Here she related the whole, which we have recorded in the preceding chapter, and with which the serjeant had acquainted her while Mrs. James was paying her visit to Amelia. And, as the serjeant had painted the matter rather in stronger colours than the colonel, so Mrs. Atkinson again a little improved on the serjeant. Neither of these good people, perhaps, intended to aggravate any circumstance; but such is, I believe, the unavoidable consequence of all reports. Mrs. Atkinson, indeed, may be supposed not to see what related to James in the most favourable light,

Digitized by Google

as the serjeant, with more honesty than prudence, had suggested to his wife that the colonel had not the kindest opinion of her, and had called her a sly and demure ——: it is true he omitted ill-looking b—; two words which are, perhaps, superior to the patience of any Job in petticoats that ever lived. He made amends, however, by substituting some other phrases in their stead, not extremely agreeable to a female ear.

It appeared to Amelia, from Mrs. Atkinson's relation, that the colonel had grossly abused Booth to the serjeant, and had absolutely refused to become his bail. Poor Amelia became a pale and motionless statue at this account. At length she cried, "If this be true, I and mine are all, indeed, undone. We have no comfort, no hope, no friend left. I cannot disbelieve you. I know you would not deceive me. Why should you, indeed, deceive me? But what can have caused this alteration since last night? Did I say or do anything to offend him?"

"You said and did rather, I believe, a great deal too much to please him," answered Mrs. Atkinson. "Besides, he is not in the least offended with you. On the contrary, he said many kind things."

"What can my poor love have done?" said Amelia. "He hath not seen the colonel since last night. Some villain hath set him against my husband; he was once before suspicious of such a person. Some cruel monster hath belied his innocence!"

"Pardon me, dear madam," said Mrs. Atkinson; "I believe the person who hath injured the captain with this friend of his is one of the worthiest and

Digitized by Google

best of creatures — nay, do not be surprized; the person I mean is even your fair self: sure you would not be so dull in any other case; but in this, gratitude, humility, modesty, every virtue, shuts your eyes.

Mortales hebetant visus,

as Virgil says. What in the world can be more consistent than his desire to have you at his own house and to keep your husband confined in another? All that he said and all that he did yesterday, and, what is more convincing to me than both, all that he looked last night, are very consistent with both these designs."

"O Heavens!" cries Amelia, "you chill my blood with horror! the idea freezes me to death; I cannot, must not, will not think it. Nothing but conviction! Heaven forbid I should ever have more conviction! And did he abuse my husband? what? did he abuse a poor, unhappy, distrest creature, opprest, ruined, torn from his children, torn away from his wretched wife; the honestest, worthiest, noblest, tenderest, fondest, best — " Here she burst into an agony of grief, which exceeds the power of description.

In this situation Mrs. Atkinson was doing her utmost to support her when a most violent knocking was heard at the door, and immediately the serjeant ran hastily into the room, bringing with him a cordial which presently relieved Amelia. What this cordial was, we shall inform the reader in due time. In the mean while he must suspend his curiosity;

Digitized by Google

and the gentlemen at White's may lay wagers whether it was Ward's pill or Dr. James's powder.

But before we close this chapter, and return back to the bailiff's house, we must do our best to rescue the character of our heroine from the dulness of apprehension, which several of our quick-sighted readers may lay more heavily to her charge than was done by her friend Mrs. Atkinson.

I must inform, therefore, all such readers, that it is not because innocence is more blind than guilt that the former often overlooks and tumbles into the pit which the latter foresees and avoids. The truth is, that it is almost impossible guilt should miss the discovering of all the snares in its way, as it is constantly prying closely into every corner in order to lay snares for others. Whereas innocence, having no such purpose, walks fearlessly and carelessly through life, and is consequently liable to tread on the gins which cunning hath laid to entrap it. To speak plainly and without allegory or figure, it is not want of sense, but want of suspicion, by which innocence is often betrayed. Again, we often admire at the folly of the dupe, when we should transfer our whole surprize to the astonishing guilt of the betrayer. In a word, many an innocent person hath owed his ruin to this circumstance alone, that the degree of villany was such as must have exceeded the faith of every man who was not himself a villain.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER TEN

IN WHICH ARE MANY PROFOUND SECRETS OF PHILOSOPHY.

BOOTH, having had enough of the author's company the preceding day, chose now another companion. Indeed the author was not very solicitous of a second interview; for, as he could have no hope from Booth's pocket, so he was not likely to receive much increase to his vanity from Booth's conversation; for, low as this wretch was in virtue, sense, learning, birth, and fortune, he was by no means low in his vanity. This passion, indeed, was so high in him, and at the same time so blinded him to his own demerits, that he hated every man who did not either flatter him or give him money. In short, he claimed a strange kind of right, either to cheat all his acquaintance of their praise or to pick their pockets of their pence, in which latter case he himself repaid very liberally with panegyric.

A very little specimen of such a fellow must have satisfied a man of Mr. Booth's temper. He chose, therefore, now to associate himself with that gentleman of whom Bondum had given so shabby a character. In short, Mr. Booth's opinion of the bailiff was such, that he recommended a man most where

Digitized by Google

he least intended it. Nay, the bailiff in the present instance, though he had drawn a malicious conclusion, honestly avowed that this was drawn only from the poverty of the person, which is never, I believe, any forcible disrecommendation to a good mind: but he must have had a very bad mind indeed, who, in Mr. Booth's circumstances, could have disliked or despised another man because that other man was poor.

Some previous conversation having past between this gentleman and Booth, in which they had both opened their several situations to each other, the former, casting an affectionate look on the latter, exprest great compassion for his circumstances, for which Booth, thanking him, said, "You must have a great deal of compassion, and be a very good man, in such a terrible situation as you describe yourself, to have any pity to spare for other people."

"My affairs, sir," answered the gentleman, "are very bad, it is true, and yet there is one circumstance which makes you appear to me more the object of pity than I am to myself; and it is this — that you must from your years be a novice in affliction, whereas I have served a long apprenticeship to misery, and ought, by this time, to be a pretty good master of my trade. To say the truth, I believe habit teaches men to bear the burthens of the mind, as it inures them to bear heavy burthens on their shoulders. Without use and experience, the strongest minds and bodies both will stagger under a weight which habit might render easy and even contemptible."

Digitized by Google

"There is great justice," cries Booth, "in the comparison; and I think I have myself experienced the truth of it; for I am not that tyro in affliction which you seem to apprehend me. And perhaps it is from the very habit you mention that I am able to support my present misfortunes a little like a man."

The gentleman smiled at this, and cried, "Indeed, captain, you are a young philosopher."

"I think," cries Booth, "I have some pretensions to that philosophy which is taught by misfortunes, and you seem to be of opinion, sir, that is one of the best schools of philosophy."

"I mean no more, sir," said the gentleman, "than that in the days of our affliction we are inclined to think more seriously than in those seasons of life when we are engaged in the hurrying pursuits of business or pleasure, when we have neither leisure nor inclination to sift and examine things to the bottom. Now there are two considerations which, from my having long fixed my thoughts upon them, have greatly supported me under all my afflictions. The one is the brevity of life even at its longest duration, which the wisest of men hath compared to the short dimension of a span. One of the Roman poets compares it to the duration of a race; and another, to the much shorter transition of a wave.

"The second consideration is the uncertainty of it. Short as its utmost limits are, it is far from being assured of reaching those limits. The next day, the next hour, the next moment, may be the end of our course. Now of what value is so uncertain, so pre-

Digitized by Google

carious a station? This consideration, indeed, however lightly it is passed over in our conception, doth, in a great measure, level all fortunes and conditions, and gives no man a right to triumph in the happiest state, or any reason to repine in the most miserable. Would the most worldly men see this in the light in which they examine all other matters, they would soon feel and acknowledge the force of this way of reasoning; for which of them would give any price for an estate from which they were liable to be immediately ejected? or, would they not laugh at him as a madman who accounted himself rich from such an uncertain possession? This is the fountain, sir, from which I have drawn my philosophy. Hence it is that I have learnt to look on all those things which are esteemed the blessings of life, and those which are dreaded as its evils, with such a degree of indifference that, as I should not be elated with possessing the former, so neither am I greatly dejected and depressed by suffering the latter. Is the actor esteemed happier to whose lot it falls to play the principal part than he who plays the lowest? and yet the drama may run twenty nights together, and by consequence may outlast our lives; but, at the best, life is only a little longer drama, and the business of the great stage is consequently a little more serious than that which is performed at the Theatre-royal. But even here, the catastrophes and calamities which are represented are capable of affecting us. The wisest men can deceive themselves into feeling the distresses of a tragedy, though they know them to be merely imaginary; and the children will often

Digitized by Google

lament them as realities: what wonder then, if these tragical scenes which I allow to be a little more serious, should a little more affect us? where then is the remedy but in the philosophy I have mentioned, which, when once by a long course of meditation it is reduced to a habit, teaches us to set a just value on everything, and cures at once all eager wishes and abject fears, all violent joy and grief concerning objects which cannot endure long, and may not exist a moment."

"You have exprest yourself extremely well," cries Booth; "and I entirely agree with the justice of your sentiments; but, however true all this may be in theory, I still doubt its efficacy in practice. And the cause of the difference between these two is this; that we reason from our heads, but act from our hearts:

> —— *Video meliora, proboque;*
> *Deteriora sequor.*

Nothing can differ more widely than wise men and fools in their estimation of things; but, as both act from their uppermost passion, they both often act like. What comfort then can your philosophy give to an avaricious man who is deprived of his riches or to an ambitious man who is stript of his power? to the fond lover who is torn from his mistress or to the tender husband who is dragged from his wife? Do you really think that any meditations on the shortness of life will soothe them in their afflictions? Is not this very shortness itself one of their afflictions? and if the evil they suffer be a temporary deprivation of what they love, will they not think their fate the

Digitized by Google

harder, and lament the more, that they are to lose any part of an enjoyment to which there is so short and so uncertain a period?"

"I beg leave, sir," said the gentleman, "to distinguish here. By philosophy, I do not mean the bare knowledge of right and wrong, but an energy, a habit, as Aristotle calls it; and this I do firmly believe, with him and with the Stoics, is superior to all the attacks of fortune."

He was proceeding when the bailiff came in, and in a surly tone bad them both good-morrow; after which he asked the philosopher if he was prepared to go to Newgate; for that he must carry him thither that afternoon.

The poor man seemed very much shocked with this news. "I hope," cries he, "you will give a little longer time, if not till the return of the writ. But I beg you particularly not to carry me thither to-day, for I expect my wife and children here in the evening."

"I have nothing to do with wives and children," cried the bailiff; "I never desire to see any wives and children here. I like no such company."

"I intreat you," said the prisoner, "give me another day. I shall take it as a great obligation; and you will disappoint me in the cruellest manner in the world if you refuse me."

"I can't help people's disappointments," cries the bailiff; "I must consider myself and my own family. I know not where I shall be paid the money that's due already. I can't afford to keep prisoners at my own expense."

Digitized by Google

"I don't intend it shall be at your expense," cries the philosopher; "my wife is gone to raise money this morning; and I hope to pay you all I owe you at her arrival. But we intend to sup together to-night at your house; and, if you should remove me now, it would be the most barbarous disappointment to us both, and will make me the most miserable man alive."

"Nay, for my part," said the bailiff, "I don't desire to do anything barbarous. I know how to treat gentlemen with civility as well as another. And when people pay as they go, and spend their money like gentlemen, I am sure nobody can accuse me of any incivility since I have been in the office. And if you intend to be merry to-night I am not the man that will prevent it. Though I say it, you may have as good a supper drest here as at any tavern in town."

"Since Mr. Bondum is so kind, captain," said the philosopher, "I hope for the favour of your company. I assure you, if it ever be my fortune to go abroad into the world, I shall be proud of the honour of your acquaintance."

"Indeed, sir," cries Booth, "it is an honour I shall be very ready to accept; but as for this evening, I cannot help saying I hope to be engaged in another place."

"I promise you, sir," answered the other, "I shall rejoice at your liberty, though I am a loser by it."

"Why, as to that matter," cries Bondum with a sneer, "I fancy, captain, you may engage yourself to the gentleman without any fear of breaking your

Digitized by Google

word; for I am very much mistaken if we part to-day."

"Pardon me, my good friend," said Booth, "but I expect my bail every minute."

"Lookee, sir," cries Bondum, "I don't love to see gentlemen in an error. I shall not take the serjeant's bail; and as for the colonel, I have been with him myself this morning (for to be sure I love to do all I can for gentlemen), and he told me he could not possibly be here to-day; besides, why should I mince the matter? there is more stuff in the office."

"What do you mean by stuff?" cries Booth.

"I mean that there is another writ," answered the bailiff, "at the suit of Mrs. Ellison, the gentlewoman that was here yesterday; and the attorney that was with her is concerned against you. Some officers would not tell you all this; but I loves to shew civility to gentlemen while they behave themselves as such. And I loves the gentlemen of the army in particular. I had like to have been in the army myself once; but I liked the commission I have better. Come, captain, let not your noble courage be cast down; what say you to a glass of white wine, or a tiff of punch, by way of whet?"

"I have told you, sir, I never drink in the morning," cries Booth a little peevishly.

"No offence I hope, sir," said the bailiff; "I hope I have not treated you with any incivility. I don't ask any gentleman to call for liquor in my house if he doth not chuse it; nor I don't desire anybody to stay here longer than they have a mind to. Newgate, to be sure, is the place for all debtors that

Digitized by Google

can't find bail. I knows what civility is, and I scorn to behave myself unbecoming a gentleman: but I'd have you consider that the twenty-four hours appointed by act of parliament are almost out; and so it is time to think of removing. As to bail, I would not have you flatter yourself; for I knows very well there are other things coming against you. Besides, the sum you are already charged with is very large, and I must see you in a place of safety. My house is no prison, though I lock up for a little time in it. Indeed, when gentlemen are gentlemen, and likely to find bail, I don't stand for a day or two; but I have a good nose at a bit of carrion, captain; I have not carried so much carrion to Newgate, without knowing the smell of it."

"I understand not your cant," cries Booth; "but I did not think to have offended you so much by refusing to drink in a morning."

"Offended me, sir!" cries the bailiff. "Who told you so? Do you think, sir, if I want a glass of wine I am under any necessity of asking my prisoners for it? Damn it, sir, I'll shew you I scorn your words. I can afford to treat you with a glass of the best wine in England, if you comes to that." He then pulled out a handful of guineas, saying, "There, sir, they are all my own; I owe nobody a shilling. I am no beggar, nor no debtor. I am the king's officer as well as you, and I will spend guinea for guinea as long as you please."

"Harkee, rascal," cries Booth, laying hold of the bailiff's collar. "How dare you treat me with this insolence? doth the law give you any authority to

Digitized by Google

insult me in my misfortunes?" At which words he gave the bailiff a good shove, and threw him from him.

"Very well, sir," cries the bailiff; "I will swear both an assault and an attempt to a rescue. If officers are to be used in this manner, there is an end of all law and justice. But, though I am not a match for you myself, I have those below that are." He then ran to the door and called up two ill-looking fellows, his followers, whom, as soon as they entered the room, he ordered to seize on Booth, declaring he would immediately carry him to Newgate; at the same time pouring out a vast quantity of abuse, below the dignity of history to record.

Booth desired the two dirty fellows to stand off, and declared he would make no resistance; at the same time bidding the bailiff carry him wherever he durst.

"I 'll shew you what I dare," cries the bailiff; and again ordered the followers to lay hold of their prisoner, saying, "He has assaulted me already, and endeavoured a rescue. I shan't trust such a fellow to walk at liberty. A gentleman, indeed! ay, ay, Newgate is the properest place for such gentry; as arrant carrion as ever was carried thither."

The fellows then both laid violent hands on Booth, and the bailiff stept to the door to order a coach; when, on a sudden, the whole scene was changed in an instant; for now the serjeant came running out of breath into the room; and, seeing his friend the captain roughly handled by two ill-looking fellows, without asking any questions stept briskly up to his

Digitized by Google

assistance, and instantly gave one of the assailants so violent a salute with his fist, that he directly measured his length on the floor.

Booth, having by this means his right arm at liberty, was unwilling to be idle, or entirely to owe his rescue from both the ruffians to the serjeant; he therefore imitated the example which his friend had set him, and with a lusty blow levelled the other follower with his companion on the ground.

The bailiff roared out, "A rescue, a rescue!" to which the serjeant answered there was no rescue intended. "The captain," said he, "wants no rescue. Here are some friends coming who will deliver him in a better manner."

The bailiff swore heartily he would carry him to Newgate in spite of all the friends in the world.

"You carry him to Newgate!" cried the serjeant, with the highest indignation. "Offer but to lay your hands on him, and I will knock your teeth down your ugly jaws." Then, turning to Booth, he cried, "They will be all here within a minute, sir; we had much ado to keep my lady from coming herself; but she is at home in good health, longing to see your honour; and I hope you will be with her within this half-hour."

And now three gentlemen entered the room; these were an attorney, the person whom the serjeant had procured in the morning to be his bail with Colonel James, and lastly Doctor Harrison himself.

The bailiff no sooner saw the attorney, with whom he was well acquainted (for the others he knew not), than he began, as the phrase is, to pull in his horns,

Digitized by Google

and ordered the two followers, who were now got again on their legs, to walk down-stairs.

"So, captain," says the doctor, "when last we parted, I believe we neither of us expected to meet in such a place as this."

"Indeed, doctor," cries Booth, "I did not expect to have been sent hither by the gentleman who did me that favour."

"How so, sir?" said the doctor; "you was sent hither by some person, I suppose, to whom you was indebted. This is the usual place, I apprehend, for creditors to send their debtors to. But you ought to be more surprized that the gentleman who sent you hither is come to release you. Mr. Murphy, you will perform all the necessary ceremonials."

The attorney then asked the bailiff with how many actions Booth was charged, and was informed there were five besides the doctor's, which was much the heaviest of all. Proper bonds were presently provided, and the doctor and the serjeant's friend signed them; the bailiff, at the instance of the attorney, making no objection to the bail.

Booth, we may be assured, made a handsome speech to the doctor for such extraordinary friendship, with which, however, we do not think proper to trouble the reader; and now everything being ended, and the company ready to depart, the bailiff stepped up to Booth, and told him he hoped he would remember civility-money.

"I believe," cries Booth, "you mean incivility-money; if there are any fees due for rudeness, I must own you have a very just claim."

Digitized by Google

"I am sure, sir," cries the bailiff, "I have treated your honour with all the respect in the world; no man, I am sure, can charge me with using a gentleman rudely. I knows what belongs to a gentleman better; but you can't deny that two of my men have been knocked down; and I doubt not but, as you are a gentleman, you will give them something to drink."

Booth was about to answer with some passion, when the attorney interfered, and whispered in his ear that it was usual to make a compliment to the officer, and that he had better comply with the custom.

"If the fellow had treated me civilly," answered Booth, "I should have had no objection to comply with a bad custom in his favour; but I am resolved I will never reward a man for using me ill; and I will not agree to give him a single farthing."

"'Tis very well, sir," said the bailiff; "I am rightly served for my good-nature; but, if it had been to do again, I would have taken care you should not have been bailed this day."

Doctor Harrison, to whom Booth referred the cause, after giving him a succinct account of what had passed, declared the captain to be in the right. He said it was a most horrid imposition that such fellows were ever suffered to prey on the necessitous; but that the example would be much worse to reward them where they had behaved themselves ill. "And I think," says he, "the bailiff is worthy of great rebuke for what he hath just now said; in which I hope he hath boasted of more power than is in him. We

Digitized by Google

do, indeed, with great justice and propriety value ourselves on our freedom if the liberty of the subject depends on the pleasure of such fellows as these!"

"It is not so neither altogether," cries the lawyer; "but custom hath established a present or fee to them at the delivery of a prisoner, which they call civility-money, and expect as in a manner their due, though in reality they have no right."

"But will any man," cries Doctor Harrison, "after what the captain hath told us, say that the bailiff hath behaved himself as he ought; and, if he had, is he to be rewarded for not acting in an unchristian and inhuman manner? it is pity that, instead of a custom of feeing them out of the pockets of the poor and wretched, when they do not behave themselves ill, there was not both a law and a practice to punish them severely when they do. In the present case, I am so far from agreeing to give the bailiff a shilling, that, if there be any method of punishing him for his rudeness, I shall be heartily glad to see it put in execution; for there are none whose conduct should be so strictly watched as that of these necessary evils in the society, as their office concerns for the most part those poor creatures who cannot do themselves justice, and as they are generally the worst of men who undertake it."

The bailiff then quitted the room, muttering that he should know better what to do another time; and shortly after, Booth and his friends left the house; but, as they were going out, the author took Doctor Harrison aside, and slipt a receipt into his hand, which the doctor returned, saying, he never sub-

Digitized by Google

scribed when he neither knew the work nor the author; but that, if he would call at his lodgings, he would be very willing to give all the encouragement to merit which was in his power.

The author took down the doctor's name and direction, and made him as many bows as he would have done had he carried off the half-guinea for which he had been fishing.

Mr. Booth then took his leave of the philosopher, and departed with the rest of his friends.

END OF VOL. II.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

This book should be returned to the Library on or before the last date stamped below.

A fine of five cents a day is incurred by retaining it beyond the specified time.

Please return promptly.

DUE AUG 13 '41

DUE DEC 16 '42

DUE FEB 5 '50

DUE JAN 4 '51

JAN 23 '51

APR 29 '52 H

MAR 22 '54

APR 5 '54 H

APR 26 '54 H

AUG 1 '56

APR 7 '58 H

DUE MAR '68 H

M634-464

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google